Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 2016
Supplement No. 14

E/2016/34/Rev.1
E/ICEF/2016/7/Rev.1

Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

Report on the first and second regular sessions and annual session of 2016

United Nations • New York, 2016

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ISSN 0252-3507

[21 October 2016]

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Part one
First regular session of 2016

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 2 to 3 February 2016

I. Organization of the session

A. Election of officers of the Executive Board

1. The Executive Board elected as President the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson, and as Vice-Presidents the Permanent Representative of Libya to the United Nations, Ibrahim O. A. Dabbashi, the Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, Durga Prasad Bhattarai, the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations, Walton Alfonso Webson, and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Hiroshi Minami.

B. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF

2. The President of the Executive Board stated that the year had begun with great optimism as the international community embarked on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related goals and targets. There were good reasons for optimism: the well-being and rights of children were well reflected in the Goals, there was a clear road map that included nations of every size and income level, there was renewed political will and determination to finance results adequately, and valuable knowledge and experience had been gained from working towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Other milestones achieved in 2015 included the positive outcomes of the conferences on financing for development and climate change, as well as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

3. Shadowing this optimism, however, were severe challenges, including complex emergencies, an escalating number and intensity of armed conflicts and an unprecedented number of protracted crises, the increasing occurrence of natural disasters, many of which are linked to climate change, and the pervasive and growing threat of terrorism. Those issues had fuelled an extreme refugee crisis, with an estimated 60 million people displaced around the world, half of them children. Such challenges could set back development by decades and had one characteristic in common: their devastating effects on children.

4. The President recognized the work of the staff of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in favour of children living in dangerous situations. One reason the organization's humanitarian work was so effective was that UNICEF and its partners worked with children, families and communities before, during and after crises, and aimed to erase the demarcation between regular and emergency programming. This was a must in a world increasingly affected by conflicts. Accountability with regard to the affected people, especially youth and children, needed to be systematically highlighted and integrated into the outcomes of the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit (23-24 May 2016).

5. It was unfortunate that the increasing work of UNICEF in humanitarian settings was taking a toll on the organization's resources. Despite the desperate plight of millions of children, many humanitarian appeals made by UNICEF and its partners continued to remain grossly underfunded. Such indifference to suffering

ought to provoke moral outrage. Mustering the will and resources to support the vital humanitarian work was urgent.

6. The President concluded with a commitment to do his utmost to chair the Executive Board in a spirit of openness and constructive dialogue in order to serve the organization's number one clients: the children of the world.

7. The Executive Director began by bidding farewell to some members of the UNICEF family, in particular Yoka Brandt, Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, whose many accomplishments, friendship and tireless dedication to the rights of the world's children were praised.

8. The Executive Director spoke of the two significant diplomatic successes of 2015: the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (General Assembly resolution 70/1) and that of the Paris Agreement at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

9. Today, addressing climate change was imperative to building a more sustainable future, and must be intertwined with action on the Sustainable Development Goals and humanitarian responses. Without enhanced action on climate change, the diplomatic triumphs of 2015 risked being marred by tragedies. Climate change was very much an equity issue, with its impacts felt most keenly — and most unfairly — by the poorest and most vulnerable. Those impacts worsened the intergenerational cycle of poverty and poor health in which millions were trapped. It slowed or even reversed development progress, and drove displacement, competition and even conflicts. The cycle must be broken if the Sustainable Development Goals were to be achieved and sustainable development promoted after 2030.

10. To help to adapt to the worsening impacts of climate change, UNICEF had identified four areas of priority: advocacy and accountability, climate change adaptation through resilient development, climate change mitigation and "greening" UNICEF. Examples presented showcased how the organization was working with Governments, communities, partners and children around the world to generate support and action for a sustainable future. UNICEF would aim to include a component on climate change in all country programmes by 2020.

11. The World Humanitarian Summit would be an opportunity to discuss ideas such as better integrating appeals to respond to immediate humanitarian crises, including climate-related disasters, as well as to long-term development needs, and developing donor incentives to do so. Flexible financing opportunities, early-warning systems and an enhanced ability to direct development assistance where it was most needed should be considered.

12. The Executive Director concluded with a call for everyone to lend their voices and support to the growing movements of citizens, communities, Governments and non-governmental organizations that advocated for and effected real change, and to prepare tomorrow's generation, today's children, to continue to fight the battle.

13. In national statements delivered during the opening of the session, delegations stressed the importance of the present session as the first formal session of the Executive Board since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

14. Many delegations expressed serious concerns about the large number of humanitarian crises occurring around the globe and the ongoing refugee crisis. They emphasized the critical role of UNICEF in addressing those complex crises, while also recognizing the effect on the organization's finances. Speakers applauded the leadership that UNICEF provided in education and psychosocial care to children in conflict areas, including through the "No Lost Generation" initiative. Several delegations emphasized the need to bridge the divide between development and humanitarian programming and looked to the World Humanitarian Summit as an opportunity to set a forward-looking agenda for all humanitarian actors.

15. Some delegations anticipated further engagement with UNICEF in the preparation of the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. The review would provide an opportunity to draw lessons from the first two years of implementation of the Strategic Plan, to reflect on its successes and challenges, to elaborate new priorities and to make efforts to ensure alignment of the work of UNICEF with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It would also be informed by the lessons learned from the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

16. Many delegations supported the Executive Director's emphasis on the effects of climate change on children. A group of delegations stated that, perhaps more than any other continent, Africa was vulnerable to multiple risks from climate change, in particular global warming, drought, rising sea levels and increased resource scarcity. Other delegations reported on the devastating effects of a warming climate in their countries, including poor crop yields, dangerously high levels of heat, droughts and flooding, all of which posed great risks to children.

17. Several delegations expressed concern about the reduction in the level of UNICEF regular resources, stressing the importance of that preferred financial modality in ensuring strategic, responsive and predictable planning and decisions for the delivery of results. UNICEF was encouraged to further improve its resource mobilization by exploring new potential strategies, such as in-kind contributions, and by exploring and better using funding modalities that supported integrated delivery and results, with complementarity between humanitarian and development funds. One delegation welcomed the references to South-South cooperation in the resource mobilization strategy, emphasizing that partnerships between developing countries and UNICEF were more effective when they mobilized resources and technical expertise from all partners.

18. Several delegations highlighted the importance of data, particularly as the global community worked towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals over the next 15 years. The availability of reliable, disaggregated data in the global indicator set was crucial. One delegation expressed appreciation for the efforts by UNICEF to help countries to collect, analyse and use data, including support to more than 100 Governments for multiple indicator cluster surveys. Another speaker said that research and data sharing were crucial to translate lessons learned into best practices and to mobilize financial resources efficiently. A clear

strategy was needed on how the research function should be positioned within UNICEF and how research would be taken into account in preparations for the next strategic plan.

19. Many delegations welcomed the organization's focus on equity and agreed that the Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved without reversing the vicious cycle of inequity in which millions of children were trapped. One delegation recognized the difficulty of the starting point, given evidence of huge levels of wealth inequality. Another delegation reaffirmed its commitment to intergenerational equity and equality, which should inspire actions relating to climate change and economic growth.

20. A number of speakers urged continued attention to middle-income countries. One suggested that they be a priority area for joint efforts by UNICEF and the concerned States, in particular because the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development did not include a special focus on those countries. Another speaker reported that, following the classification of his country as an upper-middle-income country, traditional donor funding had drastically declined, thereby compromising the effectiveness of the UNICEF country programme. The speaker urged donor countries and other development partners to continue funding the work of UNICEF in middle-income countries so that Governments might have a chance to fully implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

21. The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania expressed concerns about the co-sponsorship by UNICEF of a film that had been screened at the United Nations in October 2015 and that had sought to highlight the situation of persons with albinism in that country. He stressed that his Government was committed to protecting persons with albinism, including through broad-based interventions that adhered to human rights principles and the rule of law.

C. Adoption of the agenda

22. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2016/1/Rev.2) for the session.

23. The Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 34 observer delegations, including one intergovernmental organization, nine National Committees for UNICEF and one non-governmental organization had submitted credentials, in accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board meetings

24. Following introductory remarks by the Director, Programme Division, the Associate Director, HIV/AIDS, presented the report.

25. Delegations commended the important gains that had been achieved in the fight against HIV/AIDS, highlighting the critical role of UNICEF as a co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Nevertheless, several delegations expressed concern about the continued challenges, including the particular vulnerabilities of adolescents and the increase in AIDS-related deaths among them, especially in Africa.

26. Some delegations emphasized the importance of prevention, especially among adolescents, saying that education and involving adolescents in prevention efforts were crucial. Several delegations welcomed platforms such as the "All In to #endAdolescentAIDS" initiative, which had succeeded because of effective coordination with partners, including adolescents. One delegation urged access to treatment for persons infected with HIV, while also taking measures to prevent new infections.

27. Several delegations expressed concern about a decrease in funding for UNAIDS and the possibility of setbacks in the successes of the response to HIV/AIDS, including the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. A group of delegations said that large increases in funding could not be expected, and emphasized the importance of doing more with less by developing and strengthening partnerships and improving ways of working.

28. Another group of delegations recognized the success of UNICEF in prioritizing the needs of children and adolescents affected by HIV and thanked the organization for its commitment to achieving an AIDS-free generation. The speaker encouraged UNICEF to work closely with existing initiatives, such as the Commitment on Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Adolescents and Young People in Eastern and Southern Africa. The group also commended UNICEF for heightening the focus on HIV among populations affected by humanitarian crises, and for its efforts to maintain testing and treatment in areas affected by recent emergencies, including the Central African Republic, Malawi, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Ukraine. Another delegation said that, in view of the refugee streams and number of global conflicts, it remained very important for UNICEF to address the needs of children living with HIV and pregnant women affected by emergencies.

29. A group of delegations commended UNICEF for its work on the disaggregation and analysis of data, which had produced evidence of the increase in AIDS-related deaths among adolescents, even as the number of new cases of HIV had declined overall. The group highlighted the importance of disaggregated data, especially regarding sex and age, and requested that UNICEF undertake more sex-specific analysis and reporting.

30. The group commended the UNAIDS Fast-Track Strategy, which was structured around the Sustainable Development Goals and placed the 90-90-90 treatment target at centre stage, with the prioritization for the period 2016 to 2021 of 35 countries that, together, accounted for nearly 90 per cent of all new HIV infections. It was particularly important that UNAIDS and the co-sponsors focus on children and adolescents in efforts to reach that target.

31. The representative of Cuba reported that his country had been certified by the World Health Organization in 2015 as the first to eliminate the vertical transmission

of HIV from mother to child and the congenital transmission of syphilis. The Director, Programme Division, commended Cuba for that important achievement.

B. Oral update on UNICEF humanitarian action

32. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, the Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, presented the oral update on humanitarian action.

33. In general statements made at the opening of the session and during the discussion of the present agenda item, several delegations commended UNICEF for its humanitarian efforts in 2015, expressing their appreciation for the tireless work of its staff in favour of children living in adverse conditions. Delegations encouraged UNICEF to consistently reflect humanitarian issues on the agenda of Executive Board sessions, in order to keep the Board informed of both progress and challenges.

34. A delegation thanked the organization for the update on the status of the Emergency Programme Fund but noted with regret that, in 2015, a lack of regular resources had left the Fund far from reaching its ceiling of $75 million per annum. This had resulted in the disbursement of only $28.2 million to 15 country offices. Many delegations stressed the importance of contributing to regular resources, and to supporting humanitarian response more specifically.

35. Another delegation stated that it was encouraged to hear that UNICEF was pursuing more private sector engagement to support its humanitarian response, including with the technology and telecommunications sectors.

36. Several delegations welcomed the work of UNICEF to break down the silos between humanitarian and development work, commented that UNICEF was uniquely placed to help to eradicate such divisions and agreed that such an approach was a priority for the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit. A delegation asked about the organization's ideas on how to better integrate its "development side" in the response to long-term problems in protracted crisis situations, so as to better use all of the resources available for humanitarian response.

37. Several speakers expressed support for the organization's efforts to ensure education for children in cases of emergency, including through the "No Lost Generation" initiative. The representative of Luxembourg stressed the need to make funding available to ensure that displaced populations could receive an education and, ahead of the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference to be held in London the following day, announced that the contribution of Luxembourg to UNICEF would be quintupled to 2.2 million euros over the next four years. In general statements made at the opening of the session, other delegations announced that they would pledge both core funds and highly flexible humanitarian funds to UNICEF.

38. Several delegations encouraged UNICEF to work with partners to ensure the best possible results from the World Humanitarian Summit. Several speakers cited the report of the High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing of the United Nations Secretary-General, which included recommendations aimed at increasing efficiency,

effectiveness, accountability and transparency. Delegations encouraged UNICEF to continue to increase transparency in the use of funds and to report on the arguments for choosing certain channels of implementation and their related costs.

39. A few delegations called attention to the Zika virus that was spreading across Latin America and the Caribbean. The United Nations system was urged to put in place measures to track the spread of the virus, identify children with related disabilities and implement risk-reduction measures ahead of the start of the upcoming rainy season in Central America. The delegation of Brazil outlined its Government's plans to launch a national mobilization campaign to fight the virus. The campaign would be directed to, among other people, public service workers, youth and schoolchildren. The country needed to take three priority actions: reporting cases properly, assisting affected families and investing in research. It was committed to work on the issue in a transparent manner and in coordination with the United Nations system and other member States interested in supporting research on the virus.

40. The representative of Nepal expressed appreciation for the immediate support from UNICEF in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in April 2015, which had consisted of emergency supplies of food and medicines, water, sanitation and hygiene equipment and supplies, and education and nutrition assistance in the most affected districts. While the number of child fatalities had been comparatively low, many children had been orphaned or were at risk of being trafficked and abused. Marginalized children and children with disabilities were also in need of special protection measures.

41. A delegation expressed shock and sadness about the findings of the report on the United Nations system's failure to take appropriate action after reports of sexual abuse of children in the Central African Republic. The speaker expressed appreciation for the decisive action that UNICEF had taken to address the issue, and looked forward to updates on further actions taken to ensure internal accountability and address systemic weak points.

42. Many delegations welcomed the work done by UNICEF on innovation. UNICEF was encouraged to continue to seek new and innovative solutions to the complex problems of humanitarian crises. To promote accountability to affected people, a key priority emerging from the consultations in the lead-up the World Humanitarian Summit, the delegation committed to working with the organization to be more innovative in response to emergencies in order to promote community-based feedback mechanisms especially geared to women and young people.

43. A delegation noted that, while the World Humanitarian Summit would be an opportunity to exchange experiences and points of view about the pressing humanitarian challenges around the world, attention should also be paid to the root causes of those issues. The speaker expressed his Government's concern about the lack of intergovernmental debate in the preparatory process for the World Humanitarian Summit.

C. UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Country programme documents

44. The President of the Executive Board informed the Executive Board that, in accordance with its decision 2014/1, country programme documents would be considered and approved at the current session, on a no-objection basis. Drafts of the country programme documents for Argentina, Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay had been posted on the Executive Board website from 9 to 27 November 2015 to give members of the Executive Board an opportunity to comment. The comments received had been shared with the respective countries and regional offices and Governments and, where relevant, taken into account in the final versions of the documents now before the Executive Board. A costed evaluation plan for each country programme had been posted on the UNICEF Executive Board website, as had the United Nations Development Assistance Framework results matrices, where applicable. Further discussion was to be held only if at least five members of the Board had informed the secretariat in writing that they wished to bring a country programme before the Executive Board for further discussion, and the secretariat had received no such requests.

45. During presentations on the present agenda item, as well as in general statements made at the opening of the session, several delegations welcomed the agreement adopted at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the attention that UNICEF paid to the issue, including the plan to include a component on climate change in all country programmes by 2020.

Middle East and North Africa

46. The Regional Director presented the country programmes for Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.6 and E/ICEF/2016/P/L.7). Both countries were in protracted crises, which had reversed decades of progress and risked a lost generation of children. The "No Lost Generation" initiative highlighted two sectors traditionally neglected in humanitarian crises, namely education and protection, and had raised more than $300 million. In both countries, UNICEF was leading the water, sanitation and hygiene, education and nutrition clusters as well as the child protection subcluster, and was supporting the World Health Organization on the health cluster.

47. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic expressed satisfaction with the cooperation between UNICEF and the various ministries in the country and reaffirmed his Government's commitment to continue to support the work of the organization. He thanked UNICEF for developing the multi-year country programme of cooperation and noted that UNICEF had supported programmes that had reached about 5 million internally displaced children who were no longer enjoying security in their homes. Millions of Syrian children were also being deprived of their rights in refugee camps, received inadequate education or were being trafficked or mobilized into armed groups. The lack of funding had hampered humanitarian efforts by UNICEF and the Government.

48. The representative of Iraq expressed appreciation for the work of UNICEF, which, despite daunting challenges, had achieved several successes in the country, in cooperation with national partners. The Government of Iraq welcomed the priorities contained in the country programme document, including the special focus on health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, child protection, adolescent development, enhanced social policies and coordination during emergencies, and it would continue to cooperate with UNICEF to implement the national strategy, with a special focus on pregnant mothers and the health of the child, over the period 2016-2019.

Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

49. The Regional Director presented the country programme for Azerbaijan (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.1). The programme was centred on strengthening national and local capacity, fostering clear accountabilities for child rights, modern management practices and more equitable allocation of resources at decentralized levels, especially among the populations that were most difficult to reach.

50. The representative of Azerbaijan referred to examples of successful cooperation with UNICEF, including the organization's contributions in the areas of advocacy and early education, which had leveraged government resources for the sustainable financing of early education, a recent cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection that had led to the drafting of a new law on the rights of persons with disabilities, and the support of UNICEF for the country's agenda that had led to the establishment of a countrywide public service. In a statement made at the opening of the session, the delegation had expressed the country's pride in its decades-long productive cooperation with UNICEF, and reported that more than $2 million had been allocated through the Government for targeted joint activities, including social allowances for the most vulnerable children and adolescents and their families.

51. The representative of Armenia recognized the important global role of UNICEF and took note of the structured dialogue with Member States in preparing the new cycle of country programme documents for the period 2016-2020. The delegation expressed concern about what it considered to be political language in the country programme document for Azerbaijan. The delegation said that the language of all United Nations programme documents should be harmonized and consistent, and that the country programme documents prepared by UNICEF should be aligned with those prepared by other United Nations agencies.

52. After further interventions by both delegations, the President and the Executive Director reminded delegations that UNICEF was an organization focused on alleviating the suffering and promoting the well-being of children, and stressed the non-political nature of its mandate.

Eastern and Southern Africa

53. The Regional Director presented the country programmes for Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.2 and E/ICEF/2016/P/L.3), and thanked the Governments of those two countries for their continued support and strong partnership with UNICEF. Both programmes would support national efforts

to reduce child poverty and produce results for children, with a particular focus on hard-to-reach areas and population groups. In both countries, programme implementation would employ a mix of strategies, including the development and strengthening of national capacity, evidence-based advocacy and technical assistance, communication and strategic partnerships and enhanced linkages between different sectors.

54. The representative of Ethiopia said that the preparation and finalization of the country programme document had taken place at a critical time, when Ethiopia was finalizing the second new five-year goal in its Growth and Transformation Plan and starting its implementation. The document, which had been thoroughly discussed with stakeholders, in terms of development, humanitarian gaps and challenges and UNICEF comparative advantages, was thus fully aligned with national priorities and needs, as well as the national medium-term plan. Although Ethiopia had made remarkable progress in economic growth, poverty reduction and the achievement of many of the Millennium Development Goals, millions of people — in particular children and women — were still living in extreme poverty and required basic social services, and a lot of work remained to be done.

55. The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania said that the Government believed that the adoption of the country programme document would further strengthen coordination and enhance the role of UNICEF to complement government efforts to promote child welfare. He took note of the challenges relating to the promotion and protection of child welfare and reiterated his country's commitment to promote and protect the quality of life and well-being of children.

Latin America and Caribbean

56. The Regional Director presented the country programmes for Argentina and Uruguay (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.4 and E/ICEF/2016/P/L.5). The programmes had been developed on the basis of the respective national priorities, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.

57. The representative of Argentina welcomed the country programme, which aimed to support and complement government efforts to ensure children's full enjoyment of their rights by promoting their social inclusion, in particular that of the most vulnerable and marginalized children. As there had recently been a change of Government, in the coming months Argentina would negotiate with UNICEF a specific action plan for the country programme focussing on the protection and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents. The five elements of the country programme — social inclusion and monitoring the rights of the child, inclusive and good-quality education, protection and justice for children and adolescents, the health and well-being of children and adolescents, and the mobilization of resources — would facilitate a greater enhancement of the systems and capacities for designing, coordinating, presenting and funding policies relating to children. The programme would give particular attention to adolescents in areas such as education, health, participation and empowerment, and gender awareness.

58. The representative of Uruguay expressed appreciation for the work of UNICEF, in particular the country programme's focus on education and child health,

among other areas. The examination of areas such as early childhood, education and child protection, as outlined in the country programme document, would assist Uruguay in its efforts to achieve the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Government was particularly concerned about persistent levels of child poverty and low graduation rates, including a completion rate of secondary education of only 38 per cent. Large numbers of children were living in institutions, with the country ranking fourth in the region in terms of the rate of institutionalized children. While progress had been seen in many areas, several factors that had an adverse effect on children persisted. The Government looked forward to continuing to work with UNICEF to meet the real and critical needs of children in a sustainable manner.

59. Another speaker welcomed efforts by UNICEF to address climate change, as well as the elements of those two country programmes to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities. He urged the acceleration of efforts to collect, analyse and monitor data on the progress of children with disabilities within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, which would ensure that this vulnerable group, in particular girls with disabilities, was not left behind.

60. A delegation congratulated UNICEF for undertaking work to analyse the national priorities of the States with which it implemented country programmes of cooperation. The delegation suggested that, to improve education outcomes, the organization set up an evaluation and monitoring committee comprising representatives of national and provincial Governments, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. The committee would provide timely follow-up to the implementation of assigned resources and conduct surveys among students. The delegation urged the international community to address issues of relevance to children in programmes for sustainable development.

61. Several delegations expressed their gratitude to the outgoing Regional Director and thanked him for his efforts on behalf of children in their respective countries and the wider region.

62. The Executive Board adopted the seven country programme documents, on a no-objection basis, in decision 2016/1 (see annex I).

(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes

63. The President said that, in accordance with its decision 2009/11, the Executive Board had been informed of the one-year extensions of the country programmes for Ghana, Malawi and Oman, as presented in document E/ICEF/2016/P/L.8.

64. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/2 (see annex I).

D. Evaluation reports and management response

(a) Plan for global thematic evaluations, 2014-2017: review and update for 2016-2017

65. The report, which had been made available on the UNICEF website, was presented by the Director, Evaluation, following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Management. The plan had been presented to the

Executive Board at the first regular session of 2014, and had now been updated and revised to include the global thematic evaluations for 2014-2017.

66. A group of delegations expressed appreciation for the plan and for the consultation with Member States held prior to the present session. In light of the large number of Level 3 emergencies that had led to adjustments in the plan, the group urged UNICEF to continue to secure sufficient resources for evaluation work. The speaker stressed the importance of evaluations covering the seven outcome areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 as well as the cross-cutting areas.

67. Delegations welcomed the new topics that had been included in the plan, including technology in development, coverage and quality of the UNICEF humanitarian response in complex and high-threat environments, and the synthesis of results from the evaluation of UNICEF humanitarian action in protracted emergencies.

68. A delegation expressed concern about the evaluations that had been superseded or not completed and enquired about the evaluation topics that had been removed owing to a "lack of demand". Noting that some evaluations had been reprogrammed, another speaker expressed trust that steps would be taken to avoid delays.

69. A group of delegations encouraged further collaboration with other United Nations entities and partners. Information was expected on the joint programmes of UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund on child marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting. In a general statement made at the beginning of the session, one delegation urged others to increase funding for both joint programmes, stating that the current shortfalls threatened the shared ambition to end those horrendous practices within a generation.

(b) Increasing access and equity in early childhood education in the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region, and management response

70. The report, which was available on the UNICEF website, was presented by the Director, Evaluation, following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Management. The management response was then presented by the Regional Director, Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The evaluation was one of a series of five multi-country evaluations managed by the Regional Office over the past biennium.

71. A group of delegations acknowledged the positive results of the evaluation, in particular the constructive role that UNICEF played by using its position, flexibility and convening power, as well as by providing good-quality technical assistance. The group recognized the vital work of UNICEF and commended the organization for leveraging resources to early childhood education, contributing to increased access, facilitating a national dialogue and knowledge exchange and addressing system bottlenecks.

72. To improve the assessment of causality, the group encouraged the use of more varied methodologies and a more explicit presentation of the data on which conclusions were made. The group further encouraged a stronger framework for

data collection, partnerships with researchers and academic institutions, a more in-depth human rights analysis and strengthened cross-sectoral approaches. The group welcomed the assessment of the political, social and economic contexts and looked forward to a broader consideration of contextual factors, such as the widespread placement of children in institutions, nutritional deficiencies, violence and abuse, the low priority given to social assistance and needs for parenting knowledge.

73. A delegation requested clarification on how the management response would address the concerns raised in the evaluation relating to the quality of early childhood education seemingly being compromised because of rapidly expanding access to education. Concerning another evaluation finding, the delegation suggested that UNICEF develop more explicit strategies, such as staff training, to promote intersectoral linkages among its programmes in early childhood education.

E. UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2014 and report of the Board of Auditors

74. The Executive Board had before it the UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2014 and report of the Board of Auditors (A/70/5/Add.3), the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/70/380) and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors contained in its reports on the United Nations funds and programmes for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/338/Add.1).

75. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Management, the reports were presented by the Comptroller.

76. Several delegations commended the fact that the Board of Auditors had once again issued an unqualified opinion for the period under review. One delegation expressed support for the budgetary approach taken by the Executive Board and its readiness to cooperate with UNICEF to further improve accountability and transparency.

77. One speaker noted the high quality of the report of the Board of Auditors and recommended that, for future sessions of the Executive Board, the auditors themselves present the findings of the report and that UNICEF include an item relating to the Board of Auditors in the agenda of future sessions.

78. A group of delegations noted an increase in reported cases of fraud and presumptive fraud, which was seen as a positive sign of increased fraud-risk awareness. However, another speaker urged the establishment or strengthening of measures for fraud prevention and strategies to counter fraud, taking into account the risk environment in which UNICEF operated.

79. One delegation took note of the report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and encouraged the Executive Board to continue to report periodically on progress. The delegation also requested that the Executive Board report at its next session on the achievements made further to document A/70/380. A group of delegations expressed surprise that there was no

decision relating to the agenda item, given the importance of the Board's oversight function.

80. Several delegations noted with concern the decrease in the rate of implementation of the previous recommendations of the Board of Auditors, from 73 per cent in 2012 to 42 per cent in 2013. UNICEF was encouraged to place greater emphasis on implementing the Board's recommendations, and the delegations looked forward to receiving additional information on that issue. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, replied that, while UNICEF was making every effort to implement the recommendations, some recommendations required an investment or time for harmonization across the organization, as well as capacity-building among staff.

81. Delegations also took note of the findings on the lack of a clear policy on the selection, monitoring and evaluation of implementing partners and urged UNICEF to take additional measures in this regard. A group of delegations agreed with the finding of the Board of Auditors relating to outstanding cash transfers and requested clarification on the situation. Another speaker also expressed reservations about the monitoring of cash transfers. The group of delegations also urged UNICEF to carry out assurance activities in addition to the risk assessments of implementing partners.

82. The Deputy Executive Director, Field Results, noted that the report relating to 2014 did not reflect activities that had since been undertaken to address its findings. Following the 2015 launch of a "Managing for Results Initiative" and the allocation of $20 million in the 2014-2017 budget by the Executive Board to strengthen the management of implementing partners and the implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transfers, new policies and procedures had been issued, regional office capacities strengthened, training provided and tools developed to support the real-time monitoring of projects by implementing partners.

83. Several delegations supported the recommendation relating to budget management by the Board of Auditors that any grant extension be accompanied by a record of the rationale behind it and all steps taken to achieve the grant objectives within the stipulated time frame. The Comptroller stated that steps had already been taken to address the issue and the rationale was now consistently recorded. This was more an issue of data completeness in the enterprise resource planning system than of donor communication.

84. Delegations urged UNICEF to improve the implementation and monitoring of integrated monitoring and evaluation plans, which were the primary mechanism for UNICEF country offices and national partners to manage their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities and to facilitate effective results-based management. A group of delegations also emphasized the importance of strengthening internal controls to ensure that regional offices engaged in effective monitoring and evaluation of their country offices.

85. A speaker acknowledged the improvements made in addressing the concern previously expressed by the Board of Auditors with regard to the oversight of the National Committees for UNICEF, while stressing the need for UNICEF to establish reserve policies and practices that conformed with the guidelines for the Committees. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, noted the improvements

that had been made in this regard, including that only one National Committee was considered to have an assets reserve and was making efforts to reduce that reserve.

86. A speaker urged UNICEF to take appropriate measures to hold both vendors and managers accountable for any shortcomings in carrying out their responsibilities relating to procurement. The speaker also emphasized the need for UNICEF to take measures to address cross-cutting issues, including the funding of after-service health insurance. The Comptroller responded that UNICEF was systematically increasing its reserves for that insurance and that there had recently been a joint effort by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF to invest in after-service health insurance reserves to ensure that investment returns from that insurance were reinvested into the fund.

F. UNICEF resource mobilization strategy

87. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, the UNICEF resource mobilization strategy (UNICEF/2016/EB/3) was presented jointly by the Director, Public Partnerships Division, and the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships.

88. Several delegations commended UNICEF for its focus on quality resources and for its efforts to demonstrate programmatic flexibility, ensure predictable resources and broaden the funding base.

89. A group of delegations noted that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development called for integrated, comprehensive and multifaceted approaches, resulting in the increasing importance of high-quality, non-earmarked funding. Partners that earmarked funds should do so thematically to provide flexibility as well as alignment with the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, thereby allowing UNICEF to improve long-term planning, reduce transaction costs, improve the effectiveness of its response and achieve better results in reaching the most vulnerable children.

90. In national statements made at the beginning of the session, some delegations stressed the importance of regular resources, with one delegation calling upon developed countries to increase their contribution to core resources, make non-core resources more flexible and honour their official development assistance commitments. A group of delegations expressed its concern that three quarters of funding still came from just 20 resource partners.

91. The same group of delegations welcomed the resource mobilization strategy, in particular, the "cases for support" produced by UNICEF for each of the outcome and cross-cutting areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, as those cases could be used as a tool to mobilize funding. They suggested that the documents might be more useful if the figures were updated regularly and made available on the UNICEF Transparency Portal.

92. The organization's active engagement with international partners and with other United Nations agencies to streamline work and increase coherence in pooled funding modalities was welcomed by the group of delegations, as was the exploration of innovative financing mechanisms, including those that aimed to

provide predictable funds for rapid emergency response. Those comments were echoed by another delegation, which in a statement made at the beginning of the session remarked that the United Nations should more than ever be ready to continue to explore other sources of funding, such as domestic financing and innovative means of funding.

93. The group of delegations looked forward to following the development of the new strategic plan and the future fundraising strategy, which would necessarily have to take into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the outcomes of the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the rapidly changing fundraising environment.

94. A delegation requested an explanation for the reduction in resources in 2016 as compared with 2014 and 2015, especially in the light of the intensification of the resource mobilization effort. The Director, Public Partnerships, explained that the figures presented for 2015 and 2016 were an estimate and a projection, respectively. While UNICEF had made every effort to raise the maximum amount of resources for children, the decline from 2014 to 2015 was due to a large number of complex crises in 2014 and 2015and, to a great extent, to currency fluctuations. UNICEF had budgeted more conservatively for 2016, including more moderate estimates for its humanitarian requirements.

95. A delegation urged UNICEF to continue to support middle-income countries in their social programmes for women and children. The delegation highlighted its willingness to support South-South cooperation in the fields of health and education, by training personnel and providing equipment and expertise. The Director, Public Partnerships, noted that South-South cooperation was very much part of the organization's strategy.

96. In comments made under another agenda item, a delegation shared its concerns about the stagnation in official development assistance provided by traditional donors and the reassignment of that aid to deal with new challenges, which had had an impact on the availability of resources to UNICEF.

G. Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2016 workplan and proposed budget

97. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, presented the division's 2016 workplan and proposed budget (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.1).

98. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the work of the National Committees for UNICEF. A group of delegations welcomed the budget's moderate growth and the inclusion, for the first time, of other resources funds in the workplan to help to finance management, development effectiveness and special purpose activities. Such inclusion improved transparency and facilitated a better understanding of the role of private fundraising and partnerships within UNICEF. The group, however, sought clarification on the provenance of the other resources funds as well as some aspects of the planned expenditures.

99. A delegation welcomed the expansion of fundraising activities to country offices and supported the recent inclusion of the country office private sector fundraising costs in the private fundraising and partnerships budget.

100. Several delegations urged a focus on ensuring a continued increase in regular resources, with one speaker requesting more information regarding the reasons for expecting an increase in 2016. The Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, responded that UNICEF had carefully chosen to invest more in private sector fundraising activities that were expected to generate additional regular resources, namely pledge donors and legacies. There was potential for growth in legacy fundraising in countries beyond the few that were the traditional sources. In addition, the budget had been constructed on the assumption that the United States dollar would not fluctuate.

101. A delegation noted the increasing importance of partnerships and innovative funding, with the contributions of Governments supported by those of financial institutions, foundations, enterprises and individual donors. Another delegation urged UNICEF to continue to expand and deepen partnerships with additional non-legacy development actors. Advocacy was seen as important to promote corporate social responsibility and a shared vision was necessary to ensure that programmes were consistent and that the specific priorities of member States, as set out in country programmes, were taken into account.

102. A delegation underscored the importance of the National Committees for UNICEF in implementing the strategic direction set by the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Plan, 2014-2017, and urged that they be provided with the necessary technical guidance, tools and operational support. The Committees not only were prominent sources of regular resources, raising funds from the private sector, including individual donors, but also played a crucial role in promoting children's rights and raising awareness of the challenges that they faced.

103. The Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF reported on the Committees' record contribution of $1.154 billion to UNICEF in 2015, which represented approximately 85 per cent of the organization's private sector revenue. He stressed the evolution of the Committees' advocacy work, which, in addition to solid relationships with global corporate partners, included the development of ties with Governments and the investment of resources to advocate legal and behavioural changes that honoured the dignity of every child. However, the refugee and migrant crisis had had an impact on the Committees' countries in ways not seen since the foundation of UNICEF, forcing a redefinition of the type of advocacy necessary to protect children. The Committees looked forward to collaborating with UNICEF to strengthen their partnership, increase their advocacy efforts and raise additional funds to ensure a better future for every child.

104. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/3 (see annex I).

H. Other matters

Provisional list of agenda items for the annual session of 2016

105. The provisional list of agenda items for the annual session of 2016 was presented by the Secretary of the Executive Board.

I. Adoption of draft decisions

106. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2016/1-3 (see annex I).

J. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board

107. The Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, said that, as highlighted during the session, 2015 had been a critical year of global agreements, which made 2016 a critical year for global action to ensure that those agreements actually produced results for children, in particular the most vulnerable.

108. Five issues had featured prominently in the deliberations of the session. The year 2016 was critical for implementing the global goals and making real progress towards more efficient and effective humanitarian action for children. It was essential to recognize interlinkages, such as those between climate and humanitarian and development interventions. The UNICEF response to the refugee and migrant crisis and to the outbreak of the Zika virus disease demonstrated the importance of working across a range of country contexts, and was a reminder of both the organization's universal mandate and the universality of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The recognition of the importance of regular resources in reaching the most vulnerable children was appreciated and it was hoped that engagement with the Executive Board to secure flexible funds would continue. UNICEF looked forward to strengthening the system-wide approach to sustainable development and expected the new quadrennial comprehensive policy review would provide a strategic framework and a direction for the United Nations development system that would support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

109. As this would be her final Executive Board session, the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, thanked the Executive Board and the Bureau for their support, which had been and would continue to be critical to UNICEF in its work to deliver results for children.

110. The President remarked that, as UNICEF was celebrating its seventieth anniversary in 2016, it could reflect with pride on its work over seven decades of protecting and saving the lives of the most vulnerable population in an increasingly complex world. The session had been very successful and marked by a spirit of collaboration and compromise that had led to the adoption of three draft decisions by the Executive Board. The broad engagement of delegations from across the regional groups had contributed to a rich and stimulating discussion.

111. As members of the Executive Board convened for informal briefings and consultations in the lead-up to the annual and second regular sessions, they should be firmly guided by the vision and the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This would help to ensure that the work of UNICEF over the final two years of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 paved the way for a new plan that would integrate the global commitments made, through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change over the next 15 years.

Part two
Annual session of 2016

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 14 to 16 June 2016

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF (item 1)

112. The President began by recognizing the leadership of Anthony Lake, the Executive Director of UNICEF, and the Deputy Executive Directors, and welcomed Justin Forsyth, the new Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships.

113. He noted that over the past year, the Executive Board had participated in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and he highlighted the World Humanitarian Summit as well as the dialogue being held by the Economic and Social Council in the lead-up to the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR).

114. This annual session was significant because the Board would consider the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, including progress made during the first two years, the goals yet to be attained and the new goals under the 2030 Agenda, to inform the remaining cycle of the current strategic plan and the design of the next.

115. The annual session came at a challenging time, in light of the refugee and migrant crisis. It was important that UNICEF increasingly combine humanitarian and development work, especially in terms of education for displaced children, and he noted the new Education Cannot Wait fund.

116. He thanked Member States for using their influence to put children at the centre of the debate during the World Humanitarian Summit and encouraged them to keep up such efforts, especially during dialogue on the long-term positioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants.

117. He emphasized that UNICEF must empower children and young people to help solve problems and noted promising strategies, including communication for development and accessible digital technology, such as U-Report.

118. The President said that the field visits of the Executive Board to Côte d'Ivoire and Argentina showed the benefits to children and communities of the work of UNICEF, with the Argentina visit demonstrating the importance of such work in high-income countries.

119. He recognized the UNICEF staff members who worked in difficult and dangerous conditions and applauded their determination for forge a better world for children.

120. The Executive Director began by recognizing Geeta Rao Gupta, who was attending her last session of the Board in her role as Deputy Executive Director, Programmes. He noted that Omar Abdi, Deputy Executive Director, Field Results, would take her place at the end of the year, with Shanelle Hall, currently Director, Supply Division, replacing Mr. Abdi at that time; and that former Chief of Staff and Regional Director Maria Calivis would serve as interim Deputy Executive Director,

Programmes, until the end of the year. He also welcomed Mr. Forsyth and two new Regional Directors: Marita Perceval for Latin America and Caribbean and Jean Gough for South Asia.

121. He cited a time of enduring peril for millions of children, with intergenerational cycles of inequity, refugees and migrants at risk, conflicts, natural disasters, damaging divisions among and within nations and children's rights under attack. Climate change and population growth in vulnerable areas would likely make these challenges grow.

122. He added that the Sustainable Development Goals represented a path to building on the progress made for children to date, including declines in under-five mortality and improvements in nutrition, immunization and education. But now it was time to act on lofty promises and reach the children left behind, those living in conflict situations, with a disability or in poverty. UNICEF could not make the world a better place for children if it failed to make itself a great place to work; that meant strengthening investment in people and partnerships.

123. He said investment in human resources reforms would be built around improving recruitment, better managing talent and more effectively evaluating and managing performance. Flexible work arrangements would benefit locally recruited staff in hardship duty stations, while the new rotation and mobility policy would help address the problem of international staff serving repeatedly in emergencies. Building a culture of open dialogue would continue to be a priority.

124. He thanked Member States, including National Committees, for their generous contributions, and renewed a call for government partners to provide more regular resources. He called for flexible and predictable funding to address humanitarian emergencies in ways that support long-term development, and to support development efforts that emphasize resilience and disaster risk reduction.

125. The Executive Director concluded by emphasizing the importance of United Nations partnerships and of working with civil society, the private sector and private citizens, including children. He said a better world for children was the driving force behind everything UNICEF did, and that UNICEF and its partners had to challenge any global sense of hopelessness by highlighting tangible results for children.

B. Adoption of the agenda (item 2)

126. The Executive Board adopted the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work for the session (E/ICEF/2016/5/Rev.1).

127. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 27 observer delegations, one intergovernmental organization, two non-governmental organizations (NGOs), four UNICEF National Committees and one other entity.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Report on the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 and annual report of the Executive Director, 2015: performance and results, including a report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (item 3)

UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (item 3)

128. The President introduced the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, incorporating the annual report of the Executive Director for 2015, accompanied by the revised results framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (E/ICEF/2016/6/Add.2); the report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 (E/ICEF/2016/6/Add.1); a data companion and scorecard; and a paper entitled "Lessons learned in the implementation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan". The report was to be considered in conjunction with the report on the midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017 (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.2/Rev.1). The Executive Board also had before it the report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit, summarizing the UNICEF response to recommendations relevant to the organization (E/ICEF/2016/8).

129. After introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, the Director of the Division of Data, Research and Policy presented the reports.

130. Delegations commended UNICEF for the results in many outcome areas: child mortality, mother-to-child transmission of HIV, access to drinking water and primary education and gender equality and maternal and child health. Several delegations appreciated that these had been achieved in a cross-sectoral manner, even in conflict and post-conflict situations. One delegation said that the 2030 Agenda provided for a more cross-cutting approach for development, human rights, humanitarian and security issues.

131. Delegations called for more progress in HIV prevention, especially education for adolescents, and for more attention to child marriage, as it contributed to HIV infection as well as to teen pregnancy, which also impeded the education of girls. The Executive Director said that UNICEF had been working closely with the scientific community on the science of the adolescent brain, a second window of challenge and opportunity.

132. One delegation appreciated the focus of UNICEF on reinforcing the centrality of equity for children within the context of the 2030 Agenda. Several delegations noted that children with disabilities were the most disadvantaged, especially in humanitarian crises. The Executive Director said that UNICEF would continue to work on the issue because those children had so much to contribute when they were included.

133. Delegations commended UNICEF for its focus on gender equity and mainstreaming, and called for continued efforts to achieve equity for girls, especially in secondary education, with a delegation noting that whole communities

benefited from girls' equal access to education. Delegations noted that clean water and sanitation were important gender issues. Delegations urged that attention be paid to preventing violence against children, both in school and at home and in humanitarian situations.

134. Delegations called for harmonizing the next strategic plan with the Sustainable Development Goals. A delegation suggested that UNICEF take note, when drafting the next strategic plan, of protracted civil wars, unprecedented numbers of refugees, slow economic recovery in traditional donor countries, budgetary difficulties leading to aid cuts and further shifts from core to non-core contributions.

135. Delegations expressed concern for refugee children, urging better linkages between humanitarian and development aid in fragile situations so that children displaced by conflict did not fall further behind. Delegations thanked UNICEF for its central role in developing the Education Cannot Wait fund.

136. Several delegations noted that UNICEF was an important actor both as an advocate for children's rights and as an agent in humanitarian action. A delegation noted that UNICEF had partially achieved its targets in increasing country capacity and the delivery of services for children in humanitarian settings across all outcome areas, and requested that UNICEF put special emphasis on that output and report back on the issue at the next annual session.

137. The Executive Director agreed that the severe and widespread crisis of refugees and migrants was a children's crisis. Many children were tragically unaccompanied and vulnerable to being trafficked and abused.

138. Delegations noted the issue of fragility in the context of middle- and high-income countries. All children should have the opportunity for comprehensive, full-fledged development for a dignified childhood, regardless of their geographic location and the income level of their country. One delegation said that it was important that UNICEF continue to support middle-income countries, noting that countries with high GDP could still have significant child poverty. Another delegation said that the vulnerabilities of small island States, regardless of classification, should be taken into account.

139. Delegations expressed concern about the decrease in the core resources that provided the flexibility to respond to crises and effectively plan and implement programming, especially in light of the need to finance the projects under the 2030 Agenda.

140. One delegation noted the implementation of the revised method of cost recovery and, as the reported cost-recovery rate was lower than projected, suggested that cost recovery be part of the agenda for the second regular session in September. The delegation also noted that full cost recovery could stimulate core funding.

141. A delegation applauded the close-to-full compliance of UNICEF by the end of 2015 with the provisions of the harmonized approach to cash transfers.

142. Several delegations called for more transparency in financial reporting, which, along with the management of financial risk, was critical to offering assurance that investment reached those it was meant for. A delegation congratulated UNICEF on

its ranking in the Aid Transparency Index, while another looked forward to UNICEF further improving its ranking.

143. Delegations said that climate change risked further marginalizing vulnerable people, and should be taken into account along with epidemic threats, urbanization and demographic transition. The Executive Director agreed that climate change was a children's issue, since children were the most vulnerable.

144. While delegations emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation, one delegation noted that such cooperation should be considered a complement to North-South cooperation, which had declined, not a substitute for it.

145. Delegations mentioned the importance of "delivering as one" to fulfil the child-related Sustainable Development Goals. UNICEF should work with other entities of the United Nations system and develop more partnerships with civil society and the private sector. A delegation recommended that UNICEF work in joint policy teams, with joint programming and implementation, making use of standard operating procedures and developing multi-stakeholder partnerships with non-State actors to leverage expertise, capacities, technologies and resources in the interest of effectiveness and efficiency. A delegation noted that UNICEF had been multiplying and strengthening its partnerships with key humanitarian and development actors in the field, including other United Nations entities.

146. The Executive Director agreed that the United Nations should improve coordination mechanisms, joint planning and needs assessment, but that the system was already building on the foundation provided by the current QCPR. He noted that in 2015 the country offices participated in 750 United Nations country team results groups, with UNICEF leading a full third of the results groups.

147. Delegations encouraged UNICEF to continue to increase its focus on evaluation and data. A delegation noted that evaluation supported learning, organizational accountability and performance assessment and a delegation recommended that the development of new approaches to provide assistance to countries be based on data and analysis. Delegations applauded UNICEF efforts in data innovation, including in accessible digital technology.

148. A delegation expressed concern at the reduction in the number of management responses to evaluations and encouraged management to more systematically follow up on evaluation recommendations and management responses. A delegation thanked UNICEF for its leading role in, and financial support to, two independent system-wide evaluations being finalized and noted that certain mandatory evaluations might become obsolete with such system-wide evaluations, freeing up scarce financial resources.

149. A delegation said the evaluation report on protecting children from violence presented mainly outputs and immediate results, such as teacher training, rather than outcomes, such as whether the training had, in fact, led to children learning more.

150. The Executive Director appreciated that so many speakers mentioned the importance of data, especially disaggregated data, which was fundamental to the ability of UNICEF to pursue its equity agenda. He suggested collaboration with interested partners on innovative data collection, in light of the information technology revolution.

151. The Director, Data, Research and Policy Division, said that UNICEF was increasingly concerned with making sure there was a demand and a use for the data collected. UNICEF had been disaggregating data by gender for a long time, but now the concern was with what was measured, such as the contribution of women to productivity and household work. He also noted progress in measuring ability and disability. He highlighted the global-level role of UNICEF in the Sustainable Development Goals, with UNICEF identified by Member States as the sole custodian of 3 indicators and the joint custodian of another 6, and that it had a supportive role on another 5. The UNICEF role on the 21 key child-related targets would be an important contribution to global accountability and advocacy.

152. A delegation appreciated that an increasing number of UNICEF offices had been implementing harmonized approaches in procurement, human resources management and information, communications and technology and financial management services since 2013, and welcomed improvements in risk-management procedures, including cash transfers. The Executive Director noted the appeal for more geographic as well as gender diversity in UNICEF staff and invited delegations to send candidates to help achieve this goal.

153. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees said that in 2015, more than 6.5 million people had donated to UNICEF, almost three times as many as four years before. He said that of the top 20 regular-resource contributors to UNICEF in 2015, 10 were National Committees. National Committees were most effective in policy advocacy with Governments and the private sector.

154. The representative of the NGO Committee on UNICEF noted the emphasis on longer-term solutions and suggested that child protection be seen as an integrated system. NGOs could be great partners for transmitting the perspective of children due to their deep engagement with communities and their outreach capacity.

155. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/5 (see annex I).

B. Report on the midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017 (item 10)

Midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget for 2014-2017: report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

156. The report on the midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017 (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.2/Rev.1) was presented by the Comptroller, following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Management. The report was to be considered in conjunction with the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 and annual report of the Executive Director, 2015. The midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget for 2014-2017: report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.5) was also considered.

157. A delegation remarked on the projected increase in total revenue of 15 per cent, an impressive result and a recognition by public and private partners of the value of UNICEF work. The delegation welcomed the fact that the cost recovery would be on the agenda for the 2016 second regular session. More precise

information and financial details on calculation of the rate and an early independent, detailed external assessment were requested.

158. A group of delegations thanked UNICEF for the information on cost recovery, and requested that donors be provided with additional information about impediments to collecting the full rate as authorized and a list of exemptions to donors in relation to the formally decided rate. The group welcomed the progress made by UNICEF on results-based management and the improved alignment between resources and the Strategic Plan, and acknowledged the use of results-based budgeting. More detailed information on the percentage increase in the proposed budget for the revised integrated resource plan and UNICEF experiences in using the integrated approach would have been appreciated.

159. One delegation welcomed the ongoing commitment to strengthening results-based budgeting, but stressed that improvement was still required, particularly to strengthen the results framework and improve results-based reporting, including to explain variations between estimates and expenditures.

160. Several delegations commended UNICEF for its efforts to optimize the budget and expand the level of resources mobilized.

161. Delegations emphasized the need for adequate core funding to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Delegations expressed concern about the imbalance between core and non-core resources and the continuing decline in core resources, which were critical for UNICEF to ensure strategic, responsive and predictable funding for the delivery of results for children.

162. A group of delegations urged financial contributors to prioritize regular and thematic funding to give UNICEF the necessary flexibility.

163. One delegation called on high-income countries to increase donations to core resources and to grant greater flexibility in the use of non-core resources; to effectively honour their official development assistance (ODA) commitments; to provide financial and technical support to low- and middle-income countries; and to improve the lot of children by implementing the 2030 Agenda. The delegation urged UNICEF to continue to improve its internal management, further raise institutional efficiency, reduce operational costs and enhance accountability.

164. A delegation noted with concern the continued decline of ODA, citing in particular assistance directed towards the Latin America and Caribbean region. The delegation urged partners from high-income countries to recommit to agree on ODA levels and to encourage specific resource allocations to the region by United Nations development agencies.

165. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/9 (see annex I).

C. Evaluation reports and management perspective and response (item 7)

Annual report for 2015 on the evaluation function in UNICEF, and management perspective

Protecting children from violence: a comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF strategies and programme performance, and management response

166. Following introductory remarks by the President, the Director, Evaluation, introduced the annual report for 2015 on the evaluation function in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2016/11), followed by the Deputy Executive Director, Management, who presented the management perspective on the annual report (UNICEF/2016/EB/5). The Director, Evaluation, then presented the evaluation report entitled "Protecting children from violence: a comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF strategies and programme performance", available on the Evaluation Office website, and the management response.

167. A group of delegations said that more priority should be put on improving the evaluation capacity of Governments and asked what UNICEF saw as its comparative advantage in that area. The Director cited UNICEF collaboration with the United Nations Evaluation Group as well as country offices, which had long provided evaluation support to national partners, and the groups that worked on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), with UNICEF often spearheading the monitoring and evaluation.

168. A group of delegations asked whether the UNICEF activity in networks and thematic areas in relation to evaluation hampered the capacity of UNICEF in its core function of supporting and implementing its own evaluations. The Director responded that it was important that UNICEF had a strong evaluation function and an independent evaluation office at headquarters, but that colleagues at the field level also needed to be supported through the regional offices and at the country level.

169. Two groups of delegations noted that the number of evaluations had been lower than planned in 2015, even while the evaluation budget had increased from 0.5 per cent to 0.65 per cent of the overall budget, raising questions, since fewer evaluations had been conducted in spite of a higher budget.

170. Two groups of delegations called for improvements in the implementation of management responses.

171. A group of delegations encouraged UNICEF to undertake a peer review of the evaluation function to ensure that it maintained its high standards and it looked forward to further improvements.

172. Another group of delegations commended the Evaluation Office for the continuous increase in the quality of evaluations, but noted that humanitarian work was evaluated less frequently than other areas, and suggested the production of a geographic and thematic overview of the coverage of evaluation compared to overall spending by region and programme. It welcomed the incorporation of human

rights, gender and equity concerns in evaluations and encouraged UNICEF to continue that work systematically.

173. A delegation said that some findings in the evaluation report were of concern, as no country had achieved substantial change in addressing harmful traditional norms and practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting.

174. The delegation also said that in spite of an increased awareness of violence against children in the evaluated countries, there was limited attention to measuring the effectiveness and impact of approaches for behavioural change. Delegations supported the key recommendations, in particular with regard to the development of an overarching theory of change to address violence against children and the renewed focus on addressing harmful social norms as the key to prevention.

175. A delegation said that, to ensure effective programmes, UNICEF policies and programming should be backed up by evidence-based research, evaluation and data that would enable the addressing of cross-sectoral and cross-cutting issues. A group of delegations noted a lack of coordination and coherence in programme planning across different levels and sectors and supported the recommendation that violence against children be made an organization-wide multisectoral priority.

176. The delegation also said that the concepts of equity, human rights, equality and gender should be clearly defined in future evaluations and inquired as to why the evaluation specifically recommended an increased focus on addressing violence among boys and children with disabilities, when other vulnerable groups were also identified. The Deputy Director, Programme Division, responded that the language should be corrected since the evaluation was not meant to focus exclusively on those two vulnerable groups.

177. A delegation encouraged UNICEF to incorporate information on programming work on violence against children in humanitarian contexts in future humanitarian evaluations.

178. The Executive Director noted that violence against children was a priority for UNICEF and agreed that the organization should build its capacity, especially at the regional and country levels. This would require more funding, as the problem was growing with the migration and refugee crisis and other emergencies.

179. The Director said that the evaluation, the first undertaken by UNICEF on violence against children, provided a baseline for keeping track of how the organization and its partners were doing in addressing it. He agreed that the human rights and equity issues should be strengthened in that area and across much of the evaluation work.

180. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/7 (see annex I).

D. UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2015 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response (item 8)

UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee annual report for 2015

181. The UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2015 annual report to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.3) was presented by the Director, Office

of Internal Audit and Investigations. The management response (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.4) was presented by the Deputy Executive Director, Management. The Audit Advisory Committee annual report for 2015 was available on the website of the Executive Board.

182. A group of delegations commended UNICEF for the annual reports and management response, and for the inclusion of an overall assurance opinion on the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control frameworks. The office's strategic approach to risk-based planning was welcomed, as was the inclusion in the annual report of a statement summarizing the adequacy of resources.

183. The group commended the improvements in the percentage of satisfactory audit ratings, and the decrease in the ratio of high-priority actions to total actions, for the third consecutive year. However, the rating of "strongly qualified opinion" on 11 out of 38 audits indicated that significant weaknesses had been identified by those audits. UNICEF was urged to prioritize and improve the most significant risk areas: results-based management, reporting, governance and accountability, and supply and logistics.

184. Although progress had been made in reducing the number of outstanding actions older than 18 months, the follow-up in this area still required close attention, given the number of outstanding recommendations remaining at the end of 2015.

185. The group was concerned about how UNICEF would ensure the necessary competency in financial management, administration and procurement in country offices, particularly in challenging contexts. UNICEF was commended for its organization-wide learning effort, but urged to continue training and capacity-building. UNICEF was also encouraged to explore means of improving compliance beyond training, including through enhanced collaboration and shared capacities with other United Nations entities at the country and regional levels, and strengthened internal control measures. The group welcomed the revision of the financial/administrative policy on internal controls.

186. The group recalled the identification by the Audit Advisory Committee in 2013 of the management of cash transfers to implementing partners as the single-largest source of financial risk. Recognizing the progress made in implementing the harmonized approach to cash transfers, the group urged UNICEF to continue to improve the quality of its implementation.

187. The group welcomed reforms by UNICEF in response to allegations of abuse and sexual exploitation in the Central African Republic, and would continue to monitor the issue, with the expectation that UNICEF would prioritize the implementation of those reforms.

188. The group congratulated the office for the improved rate of resolving and investigating reports of wrongdoing, and commended it for ensuring it had the right staff in the right places to fulfil its mandate.

189. Fraud and the misuse of programme funds by third parties were the most common themes of investigations, similar to 2013 and 2014. Given the persistence and increase in the percentage of cases of fraud involving the misuse of programme funds by third parties, it was important for UNICEF to strengthen its capacity to manage implementing partners and to build their capacity to observe the organization's standards and procedures.

190. The office was urged to conduct targeted and specialized training in regions with high rates of misconduct. In cases in which misconduct had occurred, publicly available reporting and information regarding disciplinary measures taken would be appreciated.

191. A recent Joint Inspection Unit report had concluded that more needed to be done to combat fraud in the United Nations system. The group urged UNICEF to continue and further intensify its efforts in this area as a priority.

192. The recovery by UNICEF of $23,900 from a reported loss of $790,000 was noted by the group. They welcomed additional information about efforts to recover losses, and encouraged further loss-recovery actions by the organization. UNICEF was also encouraged to pursue more inter-agency audits to ensure greater cooperation among United Nations organizations, in line with decision 2013/14.

193. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/8 (see annex I).

E. UNICEF programme cooperation (item 6)

(a) Approval of country programme documents

194. The President informed the Executive Board that, in accordance with decision 2014/1, country programme documents would be considered and approved at the current session, on a no-objection basis. Drafts of the country programme documents for Bangladesh and South Sudan had been posted on the Executive Board website from 21 March to 8 April 2016 in order to give members of the Executive Board an opportunity to comment. The comments received had been shared with the respective country and regional offices and Governments, and taken into account, as appropriate, in the final version of the documents now before the Executive Board. A costed evaluation plan for each country programme had been posted on the Executive Board website, as applicable. Further discussion was to be held only if at least five members of the Board had informed the secretariat in writing that they wished to bring a country programme before the Executive Board for further discussion, and the secretariat had received no such requests.

Eastern and Southern Africa

195. The Regional Director presented the country programme for South Sudan (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.9).

196. The representative of South Sudan expressed the strong support of the Transitional Government of National Unity for the UNICEF country programme, and provided assurances of continued commitment towards the successful implementation of the programme, within a context of austerity and declining development funds. The representative called on donors to continue to provide support to the programmes that focused on the health and well-being of women, adolescents and young people, particularly the most vulnerable and those in the humanitarian context.

197. The Regional Director expressed gratitude for the support received from the country team's donors and humanitarian and development partners over the past five years.

South Asia

198. The Regional Director presented the country programme for Bangladesh (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.10).

199. The representative of Bangladesh expressed his appreciation for the country programme document, which would further strengthen the partnership between Bangladesh and UNICEF. He said that it responded to needs on the ground and to the vision of the Government for Bangladesh to become a middle-income country by 2021, as well as to the priorities outlined in the Seventh Five Year Plan 2016-2020 and the UNDAF 2017-2020.

200. The representative requested the scale-up of the programme for the 1 million children living on the streets of the big cities and their slum areas, as well as additional focus on reducing child marriage, which he called a cardinal social problem.

201. He said that the country programme could be a success only if the country office continued to work closely with the relevant national authorities and other stakeholders in a robust consultative process, and that the Government of Bangladesh considered the programming activities of UNICEF a high priority and was fully guided by a spirit of national ownership and partnership with all stakeholders.

202. The Executive Board adopted the two country programme documents, on a no-objection basis, in decision 2016/4 (see annex I).

(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes

203. The President said that, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/11, the Executive Board had been informed of the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Cabo Verde, the Central African Republic, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania and Ukraine. The Executive Board was requested to approve the second one-year extensions of the country programmes for Burkina Faso and Yemen, and the two-year extensions of the country programmes for the Philippines and Senegal. These proposals were presented in document E/ICEF/2016/P/L.11.

204. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/6 (see annex I).

F. Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2015 (item 9)

205. The Principal Adviser, Ethics Office, presented the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2015 (E/ICEF/2016/10), first thanking her predecessor, Suomi Sakai, who had been instrumental in preparing the report.

206. A group of delegations thanked the Ethics Office for its vital contributions to fostering a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability in UNICEF and extended a warm welcome to the new Ethics Adviser. They said that a culture in which employees felt comfortable reporting wrongdoing was critical for the health of any organization and thanked the Executive Director for setting the right tone at the top. They encouraged management to continue to proactively ensure that all staff were

aware of policies and procedures that protected their right to speak up without fear of retribution.

207. They felt that the increase in the number of requests for service in 2015 reflected an increasing awareness of, and confidence in, the Office and that the increase in the number of requests relating to protection against retaliation showed that the new Ethics and Integrity e-learning course and other trainings were having a positive impact on staff awareness regarding Ethics Office policies and services.

208. Regarding the results of the Global Staff Survey, the group appreciated the willingness on the part of management to face potentially harsh data and address it in an open and transparent way. They noted that in 2015, only 51 per cent of staff felt that they worked in an environment that supported a speak-up culture; they requested an update from management regarding the progress and steps taken in the past year to reach the target of 80 per cent.

209. They were also concerned that staff reported a lack of confidence in the established mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment and agreed with the Ethics Office's suggestion that the next Global Staff Survey include specific questions on sexual harassment, and that the organization develop an action plan to prevent and address such harassment.

210. While they noted with appreciation the work of UNICEF in addressing the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Central African Republic, they noted with concern that UNICEF had one case of confirmed whistle-blower retaliation. While they were pleased that the Adviser had made recommendations to the Executive Director to remedy the situation, they took the view that the report lacked details regarding the outcome for the claimant or whether disciplinary action had been taken against the perpetrator. They welcomed additional information, and requested that future reports include such details.

211. The group said that the fundamental mission of UNICEF to protect children around the world should inform everything the organization did, and firmly supported the recommendation of the Ethics Office that UNICEF develop an internal policy regarding the safeguarding of children.

212. The Principal Adviser, Ethics, thanked the group of delegations for their support and welcome. With respect to the reported case of whistle-blower retaliation, she noted that one established case was not necessarily, in and of itself, an unhealthy development and that the management response in the case had been satisfactory in her view. She took note of the request for more detailed information and indicated that it would be carefully considered, giving due consideration to privacy concerns, as stressed by the Executive Director.

G. Oral update on UNICEF humanitarian action (item 5)

213. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, introduced the oral update on humanitarian action, which was then presented by the Director, Emergency Programmes.

214. Delegations emphasized the importance of keeping up the momentum generated by the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain to broaden the

resource base for humanitarian action and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system.

215. Delegations noted the dual mandate for development and humanitarian work of UNICEF, and requested it to lead efforts to enhance the synergy between them through joint needs assessments, analysis and planning. A delegation suggested that UNICEF play a lead role in showcasing the contribution of humanitarian preparedness and response for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

216. A delegation said that humanitarian action both delivered aid and reduced needs, and that it should not be isolated from peace, development, human-rights and climate-change agendas.

217. Delegations urged coherence with existing processes, and requested that the UNICEF work plan show clear targets and indicators as well as plans for making better use of data and feedback loops to guarantee that the voices of the beneficiaries were heard.

218. Delegations referred to the commitments of the Grand Bargain, aimed at enhancing effectiveness and efficiency, and emphasized the importance of flexible, predictable, multi-year funding as well as a rigorous monitoring mechanism. A delegation encouraged UNICEF to reach out to Member States, United Nations entities and others to secure more endorsements of the commitments.

219. Delegations noted that respect for humanitarian law and the principles of neutrality, independence, impartiality and universality was crucial.

220. A delegation welcomed UNICEF innovations, including U-Report, and encouraged the further promotion of community-based feedback mechanisms geared towards adolescent girls, women, youth and persons with disabilities in order to promote accountability to affected people.

221. A delegation stressed the need to ensure coherence between humanitarian action and development work regarding girls' and women's empowerment and gender-based violence, and thanked UNICEF for endorsing the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

222. A delegation commended the efforts of UNICEF to ensure education for all children in emergencies, its promotion of education and protection issues at the Summit and its engagement in the establishment of the Education Cannot Wait fund.

223. Delegations said that it was important to address humanitarian crises generated by natural disasters and climate change and that building resilience was crucial.

224. A delegation noted that the first core commitment signed at the Summit, to prevent and end conflicts, was also the first core responsibility signed by the Secretary-General in the Agenda for Humanity, and that the root causes of humanitarian crises were also political.

H. Annual report on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan, 2014-2017 (item 4)

225. The report (E/ICEF/2016/9) was presented by the Principal Adviser, Gender, Rights and Development, following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes.

226. Delegations expressed support for the Plan, with many commending UNICEF on its leadership on gender equality and the empowerment of women, which would be critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

227. One delegation highlighted the continued need for data disaggregated by gender and disability to facilitate an understanding of the gendered impact of violence, poverty and conflict on children.

228. Several delegations welcomed the prioritization of adolescents, and delegations requested information about plans to involve adolescent boys in support of gender equality. One delegation encouraged UNICEF to continue to demonstrate leadership in boosting the potential of adolescent girls.

229. Delegations acknowledged the gains made in reducing child marriage, with one stating that it was crucial for lessons learned to be shared with countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

230. Delegations expressed concern about the lack of progress in HIV and AIDS prevention, with more than 60 per cent of new infections among adolescent girls.

231. A delegation stressed the importance of cash-based assistance and noted that such assistance to women led to better nutrition and health outcomes for their children and more effective solutions to domestic violence.

232. Delegations stressed the importance of enhancing gender expertise within UNICEF and welcomed ongoing initiatives, noting the useful collaboration with academic institutions.

233. A delegation asked how UNICEF would ensure the strengthening of gender equality in UNICEF programmes in terms of specific budget lines for gender equality in programmes and capacity-building, and for targeted gender priorities and mainstreaming. The delegation asked about the impact on future work of the stronger results shown in the targeted priorities than in gender mainstreaming; how UNICEF would address women and girls as agents of change; and how the challenge of sexual and reproductive health was being addressed.

234. A group of delegations made suggestions for future reporting: an updates results matrix; consistency between the Gender Action Plan results matrix and the Strategic Plan data companion; explanations for the deviation of milestones from baselines or targets; results-based reporting structured around outcomes; and additional analysis of progress on goals and indicators.

I. Reports of Executive Board field visits (item 12)

Report on the field visit of Members of the Bureau of the Executive Board to Argentina, from 11 to 15 April 2016

235. The report of the field visit to Argentina (UNICEF/2016/EB/7) was introduced by H.E. Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations and President of the Executive Board. Argentina had made progress in the fulfilment of children's rights, but there were still strong disparities and equity gaps, in particular between the north and the south of the country.

236. The delegation learned of challenges affecting the well-being of children, including: obesity; adolescent suicide; early pregnancy, infant and maternal mortality; geographic differences in access to education; education quality; school dropout; and access to secondary education.

237. The delegation saw examples of innovative programmes, including an information and communications technology-based school in a remote area that provided a first opportunity to receive a secondary education; and a city secondary school with day-care facilities that allowed adolescents to continue their education.

238. The delegation was impressed by the relevance of UNICEF work on child rights in Argentina, and noted the synergy between its programmatic work and its successful fundraising efforts. Argentina was a solid example of how UNICEF could effectively work in upper-middle-income and high-income countries.

239. A video presentation followed.

240. The representative of Brazil commended UNICEF and the Government of Argentina for their work, remarking that the video had demonstrated the common challenges faced by both countries. Citing progress made in increasing incomes and fighting poverty, the representative also noted the remaining challenges. Income should be only one variable to be considered by the United Nations development system in its provision of support. Going forward, it was important to discuss the means of continued support for middle- and high-income countries.

Report of the field visit to Côte d'Ivoire, which took place from 4 to 8 April 2016

241. Mrs. Sewa Lamsal Adhikari, Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, presented the report of the field visit to Côte d'Ivoire (UNICEF/2016/EB/6).

242. The delegation observed that Côte d'Ivoire needed to substantially increase its middle-class population if it was to become an emerging economy, in accordance with the aspirations of the Government.

243. The delegation commended UNICEF for both its downstream and upstream programme implementation and recommended that UNICEF continue its focus on advocacy and public awareness-raising activities, in conjunction with the Government and other partners, in its efforts to put children on the agenda of all stakeholders.

244. The delegation said that the major challenges for Côte d'Ivoire were attaining peace consolidation and achieving social cohesion through reconciliation. The

United Nations country team, including UNICEF, must be ready to assume its leadership position as the face of the United Nations system after the departure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

245. The presentation was followed by a video.

246. The representative of Côte d'Ivoire thanked the Executive Board for the visit and said that he was fully aware of the magnitude of the challenges facing the least developed countries regarding the protection of children.

247. The representative from the Democratic Republic of the Congo said that the situation in his country was similar to that reflected in the video, including the need for awareness about vitamin A supplements, but also to change practices that made it taboo for children and women to eat certain foods. He said that that it was important to have greater cooperation with the World Food Programme and other agencies in order to change such preconceived ideas.

J. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association (item 11)

248. The Chairperson of the Global Staff Association stated that she represented more than 12,000 staff members.

249. Rather than undertake another Global Staff Survey in 2016, the Association agreed with management that more effort be put into addressing the issues already identified.

250. She noted that the Global Shared Services Centre in Budapest was up and running, with close to 80 per cent of staff recruited, and enumerated the efforts to protect the employment of existing staff.

251. She noted the vulnerability of staff in high-risk environments, citing the anniversary of the deaths of four UNICEF staff members in Somalia, and referred to the assurances by the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNICEF of security efforts, including $5.36 million of security investments for 2016.

252. The Chairperson applauded the use of flexible work arrangements under Special Emergency Compressed Time Off for staff in emergency duty stations, but said that more could be done, especially for national staff, who were not covered under the compensation package, and recommended the introduction of rest and recuperation and the harmonization of danger pay. The new policy for staff rotation and mobility would offer relief to colleagues serving for long periods in hardship duty locations by facilitating reunification with families in family duty stations.

253. Adequate health care in hardship duty stations continued to be a challenge. No time frame had yet been given for the planned review of health systems by the United Nations Joint Medical Service.

254. The transition of countries to middle- and high-income status had led to changes in programme priorities and the Association had requested training opportunities for staff to enable them to compete for the new posts.

255. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had conducted a review of the compensation package for International Professional staff, resulting in huge cuts in entitlements, especially for those in emergency duty stations; the Association had raised concerns about the impact on attracting and retaining staff.

256. The ICSC was now reviewing the compensation package for national staff, and given that the only entitlement was salary, the Association hoped that it would grant some entitlements, such as education grant, relocation grant and leave allowance. She urged the Executive Board to stand by national staff.

257. She noted that 75 per cent of staff aged 52 to 62 years preferred the option of an earlier implementation date for the mandatory retirement age of 65 for staff recruited before 1 January 2014.

258. She said that delays of nine months and more for former staff in accessing their pensions was a financial burden. The Chief Executive Officer of the Pension Fund had committed to clear the backlog by the end of May 2016, but only 40 per cent of the target had been met, and new retirees were constantly adding to the backlog. The situation was unacceptable and the Association, together with the other Staff Unions and Associations, demanded a change of management at the Pension Fund.

K. Other matters (item 13)

Provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of 2016

259. The provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of 2016 was presented by the Secretary of the Executive Board.

L. Adoption of draft decisions (item 14)

260. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2016/4 through 2015/9 (see annex I).

M. UNICEF Staff Awards and closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board (item 15)

261. The Executive Director announced the winners of the 2015 UNICEF Staff Team Awards, which recognized efforts of UNICEF staff around the world:

(a) The Syrian Arab Republic country office was recognized for outstanding efforts for children in the midst of an extraordinary and cruel humanitarian crisis. Staff had confronted recurrent sieges, shortages of basic commodities, constant security checks and sniper and mortar fire. Many had been displaced multiple times. Nevertheless, their commitment to the UNICEF mission and the future of the country had remained strong. Thanks to their work and that of UNICEF partners, 3 million children under five had been immunized against polio; 1 million had received learning materials; and almost 8 million people had gained access to improved water;

(b) The private sector fundraising and communications teams from the Thailand country office were recognized for raising awareness and funds in response to the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal. The country team had launched an innovative public appeal for support and financial contributions, working with news programmes, corporate partners, celebrities and social media. The $2.2 million raised, the largest amount ever for a country office fundraising appeal for a single overseas emergency, had supported the response in Nepal and resulted in more than 1.3 million people having access to safe water and 1,800 temporary education shelters for 180,000 children. The team's success was a model for UNICEF and for middle- and high-income countries as they sought innovative ways to raise resources for emergencies and other programmes;

(c) The staff of the Yemen country office had "stayed and delivered" for children, despite extreme hardship during the country's crisis, with aerial attacks leaving many cities destroyed. For three months, a UNICEF national staff member, the sole remaining United Nations employee in the city of Ta'izz, had lived in and worked from the UNICEF office to support those facing hunger and death. Around-the-clock efforts by staff members who returned to the office had helped to restore the city's water supply and to provide life-saving medicines to women and children. Thanks to the commitment, perseverance and bravery of the team, UNICEF helped to reach 4 million children with micronutrient interventions, immunize more than 4.6 million children against polio and provide access to safe drinking water to more than 3.7 million people.

262. The Executive Director shared his view of the overarching theme of the session: how to make UNICEF better through collaborative efforts. The world was looking to the United Nations to not only have better systems, but to deliver results for people in a world of dramatically increasing needs. Partnerships, innovations and improvements in human resources at UNICEF had been discussed, as well as the extreme importance of flexible and longer-term funding, especially core (regular) resources. He commended the spirit of engagement, inclusiveness and cooperation that had informed the discussions.

263. The President commented on the success of the session, with six decisions adopted by the Executive Board. He said that the midterm review of the Strategic Plan demonstrated that UNICEF was a proactive, can-do organization, and one that was reflective and firmly guided by data and evidence, best practices and lessons learned. The President expressed confidence that UNICEF would, with support from the Executive Board, continue to fine-tune its programmes and approaches over the next two years to reflect the evolving global context, consolidate gains and address remaining gaps.

264. The President thanked Ms. Rao Gupta, the outgoing Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, for her excellent work and warm collaboration with the Executive Board and its Bureau, and welcomed Mr. Forsyth.

Part three
Second regular session 2016

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Held at United Nations Headquarters from
14 to 16 September 2016

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF (item 1)

265. The President noted that UNICEF was developing the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, which would be shaped by the Sustainable Development Goals, the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 and such emerging issues as climate change, the refugee and migrant crisis, the prolongation of humanitarian emergencies and increasing urbanization and inequity. The input of diverse actors was important, especially children, as was the courage to try novel solutions. The discussions around the forthcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) were relevant, with UNICEF urging increased efficiency and transparency as well as coherence across development and humanitarian action in support of resilient development.

266. Addressing the needs of the children caught up in the refugee and migrant crisis was urgent, and the President requested Member States to participate in the high-level event to raise global awareness, to be hosted by Estonia, the Council of Europe, UNICEF and the United States Fund for UNICEF, on 18 September.

267. Millions of other children were trapped in conflict-torn areas, subject to violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, abduction, exploitation and recruitment into armed groups, even forced into suicide attacks. Hospitals and schools were being bombarded, children traumatized and their education interrupted. These children were among the most disadvantaged.

268. The concept of "disadvantaged" and whether UNICEF should consider fragile contexts rather than fragile countries had been subjects of much discussion over the past year. The review of the UNICEF experience in high-income countries and countries transitioning from middle-income to high-income status highlighted the benefits of a UNICEF presence in such countries, including the ability to raise funds that exceeded the cost of programmes in those countries for the benefit of other programme countries. UNICEF should not distinguish between a hungry child in Europe and one in sub-Saharan Africa, but must fulfil its mandate to reach all disadvantaged children.

269. Regular resources, key to an efficient and flexible UNICEF response to evolving needs, were expected to increase in 2016 after a decline in 2015, and the joint discussions around cost recovery were aimed at ensuring the availability of such funds.

270. The present session was the President's last in that role, and he thanked the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Directors, members of the Bureau and Executive Board. He noted the recent award to the Innovation Division and expressed his deep admiration for the UNICEF staff who put their lives on the line to help children. He would step down with great hope and confidence that UNICEF would continue to protect the rights of children everywhere, especially the most disadvantaged, helping to forge a better world for all people.

271. The Executive Director spoke about rights and results. The UNICEF mandate was the promotion of children's rights, but without results, the expression of dedication to those rights was mere rhetoric. Such failure could lead to a loss of faith in the institutions founded as an expression of human rights and in the rights themselves. Those rights were best served by the achievement of results on the ground in least developed and middle- and high-income countries alike, because rights were universal.

272. Nations that considered themselves the strongest champions of human rights had an additional responsibility to reduce injustices and inequalities in their own societies. When they failed — when growing numbers of their citizens lost hope in a better future for their children — they turned more easily to the politics of anger and division.

273. The world was more chaotic and brutal than at any time since the Second World War, with conflicts, inequalities, a degraded climate, violations of fundamental rights and emergencies sending millions fleeing their homes, and children paid the dearest cost. More than an individual tragedy, each failure to protect a child's rights represented a loss of faith in Governments and political leadership and the institutions developed after the Second World War, including the United Nations itself.

274. The only sustainable path to a restoration of faith in global institutions and the values that had shaped them was an unrelenting focus on practical results in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resources must be invested and targeted more efficiently and strategically. The new QCPR provided an opportunity to show that work on processes was about achieving practical progress and measuring success by results. Improved processes would include online, real-time information systems shared by all United Nations agencies to integrate the short- and long-term needs of communities and supported by a common and flexible situation analysis aimed at resilient development; better and more disaggregated data drawn from across the United Nations system that went beyond strictly economic factors, which could mask vulnerabilities; the institutionalization of the Sustainable Development Goals Results Group; more pooled funds for strategic programme investment to achieve the most rapid and direct impact; the use of flexible funds across development and humanitarian activities, such as cash transfers in humanitarian action, and the development of donor incentives, in accordance with the Grand Bargain agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit; and the increased coherence of development and humanitarian coordination on the ground.

275. He emphasized that such cooperative efforts must not erode the comparative advantages that made each agency uniquely valuable to Governments and communities. Acting on our common purpose should not mean redundant conformity, new bureaucratic layers or a single United Nations logo that reduced the power of our individual voices and brands and, thus, our funding and capacity as a whole.

276. The United Nations was being challenged by the devastation in the world, and the consensus around the Sustainable Development Goals offered the best opportunity in decades to achieve real results and progress for children, especially

the most disadvantaged and marginalized. In the process, faith in international cooperation would begin to be restored. The Executive Director noted the quiet heroes all around us: the wonderful UNICEF staff members who stayed and delivered in the midst of conflict; Italian ship captain Francesco Iavazzo, who saved 562 refugees; and a Syrian girl who had lost her hands but not her hope, and was waiting for prostheses to help her rebuild her life. For her sake and the sake of our values, we must not only help her get new hands, but lend her and all the children our own hands.

277. The President thanked the Executive Director and noted that the floor would be open for general statements after the presentation of agenda item 6.

B. Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work (item 2)

278. The Secretary of the Executive Board presented the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work. A delegation asked if Member States would have the opportunity to respond to the presentation of the country programme documents. The Secretary responded that they would have that opportunity after the presentation of each country programme document by the Regional Directors. Responding to the plan for general statements to follow the presentation of agenda item 6, two delegations noted that Member States normally made general statements after agenda item 1 or 2, with one delegation requesting an opportunity for separate statements on agenda item 6.

279. The Secretary responded that because session was very packed, his office had consulted with the Bureau to determine a manageable timetable, but that his office stood guided by the Member States to make any adjustments. The President concurred that Bureau had determined that the timetable reflected the most feasible time management.

280. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2016/13/Rev.2).

281. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex to the rules of procedure, the Secretary announced that credentials had been submitted by 32 observer delegations, including one intergovernmental organization, three non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 10 National Committees for UNICEF.

C. Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2017 (item 3)

282. The proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2016 (E/ICEF/2016/14/Rev.2) was introduced by the Secretary.

283. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/14 (see annex I).

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Oral update on UNICEF humanitarian action (item 4)

284. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, ad interim introduced the update, which was presented by the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes.

285. Delegations highlighted the increasing number and severity of humanitarian challenges and their impact on children, as well as underfunding of the humanitarian appeal.

286. Several delegations noted that the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing represented a challenge and opportunity to function differently, and welcomed UNICEF efforts, internally and with stakeholders, to make the humanitarian system more efficient and effective. A group of delegations requested UNICEF to share with the Executive Board a plan for the implementation of the 10 Grand Bargain work streams by the end of 2016, and offered to assist UNICEF to engage with other signatories to ensure that their implementation plans addressed the needs of children.

287. The group said that it was asking all United Nations agencies that addressed humanitarian needs to fill strategic gaps relating to needs assessments; develop holistic and prioritized response strategies geared to urgency and inclusiveness; improve context-specific operational coordination and information management; and create mutually accountable leadership structures, and asked UNICEF to invest in capacity development for local actors and first responders. The Director responded that UNICEF looked forward to building consensus with diverse stakeholders and partners and that capacity-building and collaboration with local and frontline responders would be central to UNICEF work going forward.

288. The group welcomed the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, expected to be adopted at the High-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, to be held on 19 September in New York, but noted the need to address the issue of internally displaced persons. UNICEF and partners must continue to advocate for the inclusion of refugees and migrants in national laws and policies and humanitarian and development strategies.

289. The group emphasized the importance of meaningful coordination with other humanitarian and development actors, with UNICEF leadership critical to ensuring the centrality of children.

290. A delegation expressed its appreciation for UNICEF humanitarian work in Nepal and noted that UNICEF could play a lead role in assessing how preparedness and response could contribute to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. An enabling environment and more protection were needed for children and women at risk of trafficking and abuse, as well as measures for marginalized children and those with special needs.

B. UNICEF programme cooperation (item 5)

(a) Country programme documents

291. The President informed the Executive Board that, in accordance with its decision 2014/1, country programme documents would be considered and approved in one session, on a no-objection basis. Delegations had been invited to share their comments on the country and multi-country programme documents from 21 June to 11 July 2016. The comments received had been shared with the respective countries and regional offices and Governments, and taken into account, as appropriate. The final country and multi-country programme documents had been made available on the Executive Board website on 16 August 2016.

292. Current procedures called for further discussion only if at least five members of the Board had informed the secretariat, in writing, of their wish to bring a particular programme to the Executive Board for further discussion. The secretariat had received no such requests, so the country and multi-country programme documents were approved on a no-objection basis.

Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

293. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Albania, Croatia and Montenegro (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.12 to E/ICEF/2016/P/L.14).

294. The representative of Croatia noted that the country had transitioned from middle- to high-income status and established a self-funded UNICEF country office so that UNICEF development assistance was now a partnership and broad alliance for children, engaging citizens, civil society, the media, the private sector and the Government. The country programme document reflected the country's national priorities.

295. The representative of Albania noted that the Government and UNICEF had identified two priorities for the country programme document: strengthened governance for equity, social inclusion and protection; and access to justice for children, with the aim of ending juvenile detention.

296. The representative of Montenegro welcomed the support of UNICEF on joint initiatives relating to child protection, domestic violence, juvenile justice and education aimed at greater coverage of socioeconomically deprived, marginalized and neglected children, including Roma children and those with special education needs.

East Asia and the Pacific

297. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.15 to E/ICEF/2016/P/L.19).

298. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reported that the Government, in close cooperation with UNICEF, had maintained high immunization levels and achieved successes in public health, water and sanitation and education. The Government was making efforts to improve the health and welfare of children, introducing such initiatives as the extension of maternity leave

from five to eight months and 12 years of compulsory education nationwide. The representative expressed appreciation for 30 years of support from UNICEF and donor countries.

299. The representative of Thailand affirmed the Government's support for the country programme document, which was aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Sustainable Development Goals and the country's 12 national economic and social development plans.

300. The representative of Mongolia cited recent improvements in policies and programmes oriented towards children, youth, women and families. The country programme document would contribute to the improvement of child protection and development and support the implementation of the child-related goals and targets contained in the country's Sustainable Development Vision 2030.

301. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic confirmed the alignment of the country programme document with national priorities, the five-year national socioeconomic development plan 2016-2020, the Lao People's Democratic Republic-United Nations Partnership Framework and the 2030 Agenda.

302. The representative of Viet Nam stated that the country programme document had been informed by the previous programme cycle, consultations between the Government and UNICEF and assessments of socioeconomic performance, with special attention to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the national socioeconomic development plan 2016-2020 and to the transition to lower-middle-income status. The United Nations, and UNICEF in particular, had assumed new roles as development partners.

Eastern and Southern Africa

303. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Eritrea and Mozambique (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.20 and E/ICEF/2016/P/L.21).

304. The representative of Mozambique said that the country programme document had been developed in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2017-2020, which was aligned with the Government's five-year programme 2015-2019. The cooperation with UNICEF, with its focus on access to health care, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), primary education and child rights was complementary to Government efforts to reduce child poverty.

305. The representative of Eritrea noted that the country programme document had been developed in consultation with the relevant ministries, national stakeholders and United Nations agencies. The delegation appealed for stronger partnerships to support UNICEF resources so that children continued to receive services.

Latin America and Caribbean

306. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Belize, Brazil, Honduras, Jamaica and Peru and the multi-country programme documents for the Eastern Caribbean and Guyana and Suriname (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.22 to E/ICEF/2016/P/L.28).

307. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda delivered a statement on behalf of the 14 members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) endorsing the adoption of the multi-country programmes for the Eastern Caribbean and Guyana and Suriname, the country programmes for Belize and Suriname and the two-month extension of the ongoing country programme for Haiti.

308. The group recognized the important work of UNICEF in the region, in keeping with its commitments to ensure an inclusive, equitable and prosperous and a safe and just Caribbean and a sustainable region. The country programme was aligned with regional development priorities and goals and with the 2030 Agenda and the initiatives of the Small Island States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The group was encouraged by the extensive consultation between UNICEF and its respective Governments and noted that the programmes incorporated important areas of work for the region, including quality of services and support for children in life-long learning, child protection, social protection and resilience.

309. An important challenge was the unfair classification of the programme countries as middle-income. The countries were highly indebted and among the most vulnerable to internal and external shocks and among the world's highest risk countries. A new challenge was the Zika virus, which could significantly damage families and social and economic development, especially with regard to critical tourism industry. Also, de-risking put the region's development at risk.

310. The group valued its collaboration with UNICEF and hoped that the organization would continue constructive engagement with their Governments.

311. The representative of Brazil noted that, through the new country programme, UNICEF would support national efforts to strengthen policies aimed at the protection of children and adolescents; the prevention of and response to violence; and the civic engagement of youth in the decision-making process, taking into account the need to combat discrimination against girls, people of African descent, indigenous peoples and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. The programme would foster South-South and trilateral initiatives for knowledge exchange.

312. The representative of Belize welcome the approval of the country programme and noted that challenges to its sustainable development were exaggerated by such factors as climate change and the volatility of the global economy.

313. The representative of Jamaica said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of CARICOM and noted that the focus areas of the country programme for Jamaica were in line with its priorities to improve the welfare of children and development outcomes. Jamaica had signed on to the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, and its commitments dovetailed with the 2030 Agenda and the country's broader development commitments and legal obligations.

314. The representative of Peru supported the country programme, which was focused on violence, exploitation and family neglect; opportunities for adolescents; equity for girls and boys; and children's rights. Peru reaffirmed its commitment to

the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda, which allowed it to rethink issues from a more dynamic and cross-cutting point of view.

315. The representative of Honduras expressed support for the country programme, which was focused on early childhood development; high-quality education; the protection of children against violence; and social inclusion. Honduras was a middle-income country that nevertheless faced external challenges that limited its capacity to achieve full development.

Middle East and North Africa

316. The country programme documents for the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, Morocco and Oman were presented by Mr. Geert Cappelaere (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.29 to E/ICEF/2016/P/L.32).

317. The representative of Lebanon said that while the Government's achievements had benefited more than 1 million disadvantaged children since 2011, the most critical remaining challenges for Lebanese and refugee children were child poverty, malnutrition, education, access to clean water, hygiene, immunization and domestic violence. The representative welcomed the inclusive country programme and its emphasis on child survival, development and protection and youth development and social inclusion, and reiterated the importance of shifting aspects of humanitarian assistance to address the development needs of refugees and host communities.

318. The representative of Morocco said that the focus of the country programme on the two most-vulnerable age groups, young children and adolescents, would lead to the better integration of early childhood development into the areas of health, education and protection and contribute to national efforts to ensure access to adolescents and youth, who made up 18 per cent of the population.

319. South-South and triangular cooperation was particularly important and, in that regard, Morocco had organized a conference, held in September 2016, focused on young children. The declaration adopted at the conference committed participating countries to design integrated policies for early childhood.

West and Central Africa

320. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia and Sao Tome and Principe (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.33 to E/ICEF/2016/P/L.36).

321. The representative of Côte d'Ivoire noted that the country programme had been developed together with the relevant Ivorian institutions and lined up with its national development programme 2016-2020, which reflected the Sustainable Development Goals.

322. The representative of the Gambia called the country programme document a holistic analysis of the existing conditions and in alignment with the national development plan 2017-2020, with proposals to improve child survival and development. The Government supported the programme's focus on universal education and child health and sanitation. The representative noted the vulnerability to environmental hazards of the country's health and education infrastructure.

323. The country programme documents for Albania; Belize; Brazil; Chad; Côte d'Ivoire; Croatia; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Eritrea; Gambia; Honduras; Islamic Republic of Iran; Jamaica; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Lebanon; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Mozambique; Oman; Peru; Sao Tome and Principe; Thailand; and Viet Nam; and the multi-country programme documents for the Eastern Caribbean (Anguilla; Antigua and Barbuda; Barbados; British Virgin Islands; Dominica; Grenada; Montserrat; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Trinidad and Tobago; and Turks and Caicos Islands); and Guyana and Suriname were approved.

(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes

324. The President said that, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/11, the Executive Board had been informed of the two-month extension of the country programme for Haiti; the first one-year extension of the area programme for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine; and the first one-year extension of the country programme for Sudan. The Executive Board was requested to approve a two-month extension of the country programme for Botswana; the second consecutive one-year extensions of the country programmes for Malawi and Somalia; the second consecutive two-year extension of the country programme for Burundi; and the third consecutive one-year extension of the country programme for Libya. Those proposals were presented in document E/ICEF/2016/P/L.37.

325. The representative of Haiti thanked UNICEF for extending the country programme, for its support to the initiatives of the Ministry of Health and for the professional training that had helped to guarantee the quality of and access to education. Measures had been taken by the Government to improve the situation of children in Haiti, in particular in the areas of health and education.

326. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/12 (see annex I).

C. Review of UNICEF experience in high-income countries and in countries transitioning from upper-middle-income to high-income status (item 6)

327. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, the report (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.39) was presented by the Director, Division of Data, Research and Policy. The Member States then presented general statements as well as statements responding to item 6.

General statements

328. Delegations thanked the Executive Director for his inspiring yet sobering opening statement, his able leadership of UNICEF and his pragmatic commitment to results. They congratulated the President and other Bureau members for their leadership during 2016. Several delegations expressed their appreciation to the UNICEF staff for their professionalism and devotion to helping children reach their full potential.

329. Several delegations noted the one-year anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A delegation said that the mandate of UNICEF to operationalize the obligations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child put the organization at the heart of the Agenda.

330. Several delegations said that the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 should be aligned with the forthcoming QCPR and the 2030 Agenda and should tie resources to results, with clear baselines, targets and indicators aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and focused on measuring results. It was important to collaborate with other United Nations agencies as well as multilateral organizations, civil society and the private sector. A delegation said that, as one of the largest and most successful organizations in the United Nations system, and with its unique mandate to combine humanitarian and development assistance, UNICEF should be a driver of the reforms necessary to achieve such coherence.

331. Several delegations noted the current humanitarian crisis, in which conflict was upending the lives of millions of children and leading to their mass migration, often unaccompanied. Several noted that amid the devastation wrought by conflict, terrorism, climate change and natural disasters, children suffered disproportionately. A delegation acknowledged the vital work of UNICEF in responding to humanitarian crises around the world, but emphasized that greater collective effort, including cash-based assistance, joint needs assessment and improvement in humanitarian and development engagement, was needed.

332. A delegation noted the need for such long-term measures as providing access for displaced children to health care, education and other services, while several delegations noted the imperative to address the root causes of armed conflict. A delegation urged UNICEF to continue to advocate for the inclusion of the 40 million internally displaced persons worldwide, especially children, in the development of national laws and policies and humanitarian and development strategies. The Executive Director thanked the delegation for emphasizing the internally displaced persons in so many countries, which he called a child's crisis, and called attention to the UNICEF report entitled "Uprooted: The growing crisis for refugee and migrant children".

333. Several delegations noted the United Nations summit for refugees and migrants, to be held on 19 September 2016 in New York, and welcomed the expected adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

334. A delegation requested details on the UNICEF plans for instituting the commitments of the Grand Bargain. It commended the organization for its leadership in establishing the Education Cannot Wait fund and for its efforts to ensure that uprooted children were protected from exploitation, had access to basic services, maintained their legal rights, could reunite with their families and had safe and sustainable legal global pathways for migration.

335. A delegation noted the importance of equity in early childhood development programmes. The Executive Director responded that the scientific basis of early childhood development continued to inform the work of UNICEF.

336. Several delegations highlighted the recent decline in regular resources and emphasized the importance of ensuring an adequate level of such resources. A

delegation welcomed the efforts of UNICEF to develop a sustainable financing model corresponding to current trends in official development assistance, which it hoped would allow the organization to overcome the imbalance between regular and earmarked resources.

337. Several delegations stressed that the least developed countries, especially the sub-Saharan African countries, should remain the priority in the allocation of resources and that such investment should also promote South-South cooperation, innovation and the sharing of development results. A group of delegations called for the enhancement of cooperative international efforts to assist middle-income countries, landlocked developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States in achieving internationally agreed development goals.

338. A delegation called for UNICEF to maintain and increase the quality and quantity of resources from major donors, increase the flexibility of non-core resources and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of programme implementation in order to maximize the use of resources. Several delegations were encouraged by the progress of UNICEF in engaging with the private sector, while a delegation appreciated the contention of UNICEF that development and humanitarian assistance could help support the growth of the private sector in both giving and receiving countries.

339. Several delegations noted that UNICEF had been at the forefront of innovation, while a delegation cautioned that innovation should not be limited to technology, but should also encompass the development of bold ideas that translated into concrete action. A delegation mentioned investment funds and legacy donations as examples of innovative funding. A delegation commended UNICEF for having adopted a cooperative approach and diversified business models, thereby promoting the well-being of children and the protection of their rights, while increasing its resources. The delegation noted that UNICEF had been one of the largest recipients of joint funding through pooled funds and had played a leading role in coordinating financing strategies with other United Nations agencies.

340. Delegations noted the importance of respecting each country's sovereignty and ownership of initiatives. Since each country had its own needs and opportunities regarding the rights of the child, UNICEF should not propose "one size fits all" interventions, but tailor normative frameworks to align with each country's priorities, national and sectoral plans and national systems.

341. Several delegations noted the phenomenon of rapid urbanization and the upcoming Conference on Human Settlements, to be held in October in Quito, where they hoped to achieve an urban agenda incorporating adequate conditions for children. They called for UNICEF to prioritize the issue of urbanization.

342. A delegation looked forward to a clear, action-oriented response from UNICEF to the recent report of the Joint Inspection Unit on fraud prevention, detection and response in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2016/4).

343. The delegation from Sweden announced that the country had pledged an additional $59 million to core resources, bringing its support of UNICEF to $121 million for 2016. The Executive Director thanked Sweden and hoped that such leadership would encourage others to prioritize core resources.

344. A delegation hoped that UNICEF would further summarize the lessons learned in different countries and identify good practices and successful experiences in order to facilitate learning and exchanges.

Statements responding to item 6

345. Several delegations expressed their support to UNICEF for its work in countries transitioning from middle-income status and its continued programme engagement in high-income countries. Several noted their shared recognition of the universal mandate of UNICEF to reach the most disadvantaged children, wherever they lived.

346. Many delegations stressed that low-income countries, especially the least developed countries and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, should remain the priority in terms of fund allocations. A group of delegations said that middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were still experiencing challenges relating to poverty and inequality, and noted with concern the regional decline of official development assistance and the reduction of United Nations development system activities.

347. One delegation highlighted the UNICEF contribution to promoting and enhancing the capacity of middle-income countries in terms of child rights, and stated that ongoing technical support and advice from the organization were essential.

348. Many delegations called for tailored approaches in newly transitioned and high-income countries, geared to specific country context and level of development.

349. Some delegations noted the benefits of continued UNICEF engagement in high-income countries for both children and the organization's global activities. They agreed with the findings of the review that such engagement had helped to generate funds that exceeded the cost of UNICEF programming and advocacy in-country and provided useful lessons for work in countries with similar challenges.

350. Delegations noted that the experience in middle- and high-income countries had relevance for other United Nations entities, and that a coherent approach should be adopted across the entire system, with some calling for its alignment with the forthcoming QCPR. Delegations urged the measurement of elements of sustainable development beyond purely economic ones, such as gross national income per capita.

351. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF said that advocacy in high-income countries had helped it to raise funds for children in the least developed contexts. The relatively modest amounts invested in programme and policy work in high-income countries had been offset dramatically by donations and the impact such investments generated in the lives of children globally.

352. The Executive Director emphasized that the work of UNICEF in the least developed countries remained a priority. He was confident that the approach to engagement agreed to by the Board would increase resources raised in high-income countries, which would be leveraged to benefit the least developed countries.

353. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/11 (see annex I).

D. Road map to the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (item 7)

354. Following an introduction by the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, the Director, Data, Research and Policy Division, presented the road map.

355. A delegation welcomed the timetable, which included opportunities, including informal workshops, for Member States to provide early input. However, the workshops should present more than a single proposal, as enabling Member States to understand various contexts would allow them to develop a more strategic approach. The Director agreed that presenting diverse scenarios and multiple opportunities for discussion would be beneficial.

356. The delegation asked whether the strategic plans of the other funds and programmes would have the same structure as the UNICEF plan, and how to ensure integration and avoid parallel processes, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. The Director said that UNICEF had been meeting with the other funds and programmes in New York to determine how to work together more regularly and substantively for effective results, but that he did not anticipate the exact same structure, as the organizations had different business models and issues.

357. The NGO Committee on UNICEF advocated for full consideration of several areas in the next plan: unaccompanied, migrant and refugee children; protection from all forms of violence; equity and inclusion; and the collection of disaggregated data to track the progress of the most disadvantaged children. The Deputy Executive Director agreed that collecting such data was crucial.

358. The Committee requested details on the engagement of civil society in the consultation process for the plan and urged the incorporation of the perspectives of children, especially those living in poverty and exclusion. The Deputy Executive Director said that the secretariat had started engaging with children's groups, and would also engage with civil society and NGOs.

E. Structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014 2017 (item 8)

359. The report (UNICEF/2016/EB/9) was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, and jointly presented by the Director, Public Partnerships Division, and the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division.

360. A group of delegations stated that UNICEF and its partners should hold a strategic discussion on investments in high-quality financing. The group reminded Member States of their joint commitment to aid effectiveness, which was stymied when resources were tied to selected projects at the country level.

361. UNICEF was encouraged by the recent informal consultations, but requested formal discussions on financing and the UNICEF plan to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, including information on funding gaps and a risk analysis of unmet financial needs. Maximum impact could be achieved by mobilizing resources and combining capacities with other United Nations development system entities.

362. The group expressed concern about individual programmes whose failure to cover their own direct and indirect costs led to cross-subsidization. It urged

collaboration with the other New York-based funds and programmes to develop a cost-recovery strategy guided by the QCPR.

363. The group concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary-General in his review of the QCPR to strengthen the structured dialogue, and requested that it be a standard agenda item for future Executive Board sessions. If genuine financing dialogue took place soon and additional Member States and private sector actors considered increases in core and/or thematic support to UNICEF, the group would try to adjust its substantial programme support and explore other ways of increasing budget predictability.

364. A delegation said that although other resources revenue received by UNICEF in 2015 was threefold that of regular resources, most such funds were earmarked, leading to fragmentation, high transaction costs, curtailed impact and less value for money. The delegation advocated for more flexible funding, such as pooled funding, but considered the focus on United Nations system partners for such funding and joint programming to be a shortcoming. It urged the inclusion of other development actors, citing the example of the UNICEF WASH programme, which included several bilateral partners.

F. Evaluation report and management response (item 9)

Equity, scalability and sustainability in UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene programming: evidence from UNICEF evaluations 2007-2015, and management response

365. The Director, Evaluation, presented the report, followed by the Director, Programme Division, who presented the management response.

366. Several delegations commended UNICEF for the increased access to drinking water for 40 million people and improved sanitation for 18 million people. The group looked forward to seeing WASH highlighted in the next strategic plan, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals. A delegation said that it would welcome a similar evaluation of WASH in emergencies.

367. Regarding equity in WASH, delegations requested information about the links between WASH services in schools and the education of girls. The Director, Programme Division, responded that UNICEF was supporting menstrual hygiene management and was committed to strengthening the evidence base for the link between WASH in schools and the attendance and retention of girls.

368. A delegation suggested that UNICEF consider adequate approaches in light of the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons needing WASH services, especially considering the human right to safe water and sanitation and the ambitious Sustainable Development Goal 6 for universal, safe access. The Director, Evaluation, responded that an effort was under way to develop a similar evaluation regarding humanitarian action, of which WASH would be an important area.

369. Several delegations called for WASH programmes to be sustainable, especially in terms of financing, with a delegation urging such measures as innovative approaches for tariff systems and payment options for the poor. A group of delegations said that UNICEF should use its grant funding strategically, blending

domestic government funding with donor grant funding and guarantees, sovereign loans from international financial institutions and bond financing from domestic capital markets. The Director, Programme Division, noted that UNICEF was already supporting financial sustainability in various contexts, including the Blue Fund in West Africa.

370. The group challenged UNICEF to be a game-changer by stating publicly that, together with local partners, it would put robust and effective processes in place to insure the long-term functionality and sustainability of WASH infrastructure, and requested UNICEF to report annually on the matter. The Director, Programme Division, noted that UNICEF sustainability compacts, whereby Governments commit to such functionality as part of the immediate UNICEF investment, were under way in nine countries in West and Central Africa.

371. The group supported investment in national mapping and monitoring systems to guide national priorities, plans and budgets.

372. Notwithstanding the positive evaluation of Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) interventions, a delegation hoped that such success would not diminish focus on rural water supply and WASH in schools. The Director, Programme Division, responded that CLTS could not be sustained without continued effort to improve both rural and urban water supplies as well as WASH in schools.

373. A delegation said that the results with regard to the sanitation ladder were disconcerting, as that monitoring approach was a key principle of both the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

374. The delegation said that it supported the report's third recommendation: to improve the design and results framework of WASH programmes. In light of the emphasis in the Sustainable Development Goals on a comprehensive approach to water and sanitation, it encouraged UNICEF to take into consideration, in the design of its programmes, the protection of water sources, the reuse of waste water and the treatment of faecal waste along the sanitation chain.

375. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, presented the response from the secretariat to the request made in decision 2016/7 to accelerate progress towards the target of a minimum of 1 per cent of overall programmed expenditures allocated to evaluation. She reported that expenditure had risen from 0.5 per cent of programme spending to 0.65 per cent in 2015, an increase of 30 per cent. She then outlined elements of an action plan to further increase expenditure on evaluation.

G. Private fundraising and partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2015 (item 10)

376. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, the report (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.7) was presented by the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships.

377. A group of delegations appreciated the positive financial results for 2015, which reflected the solid performance of the National Committees, the UNICEF field offices and Private Fundraising and Partnerships.

378. The group was concerned about the decrease in revenue from regular resources and requested that UNICEF present to the Board ways in which the organization could address the challenge of fluctuating exchange rates.

379. While welcoming the expansion of fundraising activities by field offices, the group requested that UNICEF disaggregate the reporting of National Committee and UNICEF field office revenue and expenditures in future.

380. The group commended Private Fundraising and Partnerships on the results of the targeted market measures for investment funds and requested reporting on the allocation of such funds to facilitate the analysis of their impact in each country. The group also welcomed the non-financial private sector engagement, and urged coordination among Private Fundraising and Partnerships, the UNICEF Programme Division and other units to optimize support for the National Committees and other offices operating in high-income countries.

381. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF noted that its members had raised 85 per cent of the $1.3 billion private sector net revenue to UNICEF, which was $83 million higher than the approved budget. The Committees had also raised almost $200 million for humanitarian projects. Together with Private Fundraising and Partnerships, they had expanded and renewed more than 20 multi-country partnerships, representing a combined revenue of $100 million, and were working to develop additional private sector partnerships.

382. The refugee and migrant crisis in Europe had transformed the advocacy work of the Committees, prompting the development of new ways of collaborating with UNICEF colleagues.

383. The Executive Director thanked the National Committees, which represented the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who contributed their financial resources, time and advocacy efforts on behalf of children.

H. UNICEF Strategic Plan: updated financial estimates, 2016-2019 (item 11)

384. Following an introduction by the Deputy Executive Director, Management, the Comptroller and Director, Division of Financial Administrative Management, presented the financial estimates (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.6).

385. A group of delegations welcomed the estimates provided as a good basis for results-based management, but was concerned about some of the figures, particularly the 15 per cent decline in regular resources in 2015. It hoped that regular resources would increase in 2016, as projected by UNICEF, as well as in the future. It welcomed the gradual build-down of the balance of resources, as long as it was in alignment with United Nations policies, and hoped that a tighter reserve would incentivize UNICEF to prioritize cost efficiency. UNICEF was less pressed financially than other United Nations organizations, and it attributed that advantage, in part, to efforts to broaden the donor base, especially within the private sector, and its acceptance of thematic funding, although it asked whether a wider donor base had increased transaction costs. The group of delegations encouraged UNICEF to keep abreast of best practices in the management of currency fluctuation impacts

and to report to the Board on those efforts. It also urged UNICEF to continue to engage with Member States and others to ensure adequate funding in the future. The Comptroller and Director affirmed that UNICEF approached currency fluctuation issues seriously, including collaborating with external, independent advisers on best practices for managing its exposure and investments.

386. The Executive Director thanked the group of delegations for the helpful and encouraging comments and said that UNICEF would continue to work in a transparent way with the Board. He also thanked Sweden for its generous contribution. A UNICEF priority was increasing its donor base with Governments, the private sector and individual donors. The organization would continue to maximize resource allocations and expenditures on programmes, giving priority attention to least developed countries. He had reminded UNICEF staff that efficiency was still paramount, however, as the needs of children were growing rapidly. Such efficiency would also allow investment in the future of UNICEF and increase donor confidence.

387. The Executive Board adopted decision 2016/13 (see annex I).

I. Report on the independent assessment of the implementation of cost recovery (joint paper of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women) (item 12)

388. The independent consultant, Mr. Richard Nygard, presented the report (DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2016/CRP.1).

389. The Comptroller and Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management, outlined UNICEF efforts to implement the Executive Board decision on cost recovery (2013/5), which requested the four funds and programmes to present, in 2016, a review of the implementation of the general harmonized cost-recovery rate of 8 per cent for non-core contributions. He shared information supporting the calculation of the effective cost-recovery rates for 2014 and 2015 presented in the report.

390. A group of delegations noted that only partial information had been presented, although the Boards of the funds and programmes should have received detailed information on the implementation of the full cost-recovery principle, and there was no sound analysis as to whether the current methodology was compliant with the principle. It emphasized its interest in ensuring that there was no cross-subsidy from core to non-core resources.

391. The group asserted that the actual cost-recovery rates presented in the report needed substantiation and that essential information was missing, namely, the trends of cross-subsidy over the preceding two years and the financial volumes associated with the different cost-recovery rates and their sources, including the full list of exemptions and waivers. The group requested a set of mutually agreed definitions of direct and indirect costs that the funds and programmes should use for more coherence and transparency and that such information be provided in time for the consultations on the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 and the integrated budget, 2018-2021 during the first and annual sessions in 2017. It proposed, as had the Boards of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

(UN-Women) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), that the UNICEF Board include those elements in the decision under agenda item 11.

J. Report of the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP to the Kyrgyz Republic, 2-7 May 2016 (item 13)

392. The report (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-WFP/2016/CRP.1) was introduced by the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations and Vice-President of the UNICEF Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Walton Alfonso Webson. The visit was aimed at enhancing understanding by Member States of the ways in which the United Nations development system was supporting Kyrgyzstan in the implementation of its national development strategy in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. United Nations inter-agency collaboration and coordination was a particular focus of the visit.

393. The delegation met with high-level government officials, development partners, foundations, members of civil society, representatives of the United Nations country team and the United Nations in-country leadership. The delegation saw projects headed by each of the agencies participating in the trip. Of note were the UNICEF-supported programmes for better access to preschool education and the integration of children with disabilities at the community-based kindergarten level, as well as a family medicine centre supported by UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

394. The annual budget for the United Nations office had recently increased to just over $67 million, from around $50 million over the previous decade, although donor assistance for some programmes had declined slightly. In 2016, 14 United Nations agencies were resident in Kyrgyzstan, out of the 27 United Nations agencies represented there.

395. Each agency operated autonomously, but collaborated closely with one another and the national programmes, and participated in a national coordinating body. Inter-agency collaboration was considered successful in planning, strategic development activities and joint national programmes, including peacebuilding.

K. Other matters (item 14)

Provisional list of agenda items for the first regular session of 2017

396. The Secretary introduced the list to the Executive Board for information.

L. Adoption of draft decisions (item 15)

397. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2016/10 through 2016/14 (see annex I).

M. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board (item 16)

398. The Executive Director reiterated the importance of achieving results, both for their relevance and for the values around which the United Nations organizations had united 70 years ago, and which drove their ongoing work.

399. He said that the discussions on improving UNICEF had provided helpful guidance and ideas, including ways in which UNICEF could work even more closely with other United Nations agencies. The adoption of the draft decision on the work of UNICEF in high-income countries was appreciated, as was the approval of the country programme documents.

400. Speaking on behalf of the President, Vice-President H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Minami, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, expressed appreciation that the decisions adopted at the session reflected the rich discussions during consultations and the agreements reached. He reflected on the accomplishments of the Board during its sessions in 2016, including the adoption of 14 decisions; the approval of 32 country programme documents and 2 multi-country programme documents covering 46 countries and territories; the review of the organization's engagement in middle-income and high-income countries; and field visits to Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire and Kyrgyzstan.

401. The Vice-President urged Member States to help UNICEF to continue its sterling work on behalf of children by advocating for increased contributions to its regular resources, which had declined by 11 per cent in 2015. While the forecast for growth was optimistic, vigilance was required for UNICEF to achieve and maintain a positive trend for such flexible, non-earmarked funds. He encouraged Member States to consider the UNICEF proposals on financing in its submission on reforming the United Nations development system in the context of the forthcoming QCPR, including establishing more pooled funds and using flexible funding across development and humanitarian activities as well as innovative financing mechanisms, while ensuring that each agency's comparative advantage was preserved.

Annex I

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2016

First regular session

2016/1
Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Argentina, Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.1-E/ICEF/2016/P/L.7), were made available to Member States for their comments and input from 9 to 27 November 2015, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1 on modifications to procedures for consideration and approval of country programme documentation;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Argentina, Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.1-E/ICEF/2016/P/L.7).

First regular session
2 February 2016

2016/2
Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

Takes note of the one-year extensions of the country programmes for Ghana, Malawi and Oman, which were approved by the Executive Director, as presented in the table in document E/ICEF/2016/P/L.8.

First regular session
3 February 2016

2016/3
Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2016 workplan and proposed budget

A. Private Fundraising and Partnerships budgeted expenses for the 2016 fiscal year (special purpose)

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* for the fiscal year 2016 (1 January to 31 December) budgeted special purpose expenses of $149 million, as detailed in the table below.

(Millions of United States dollars)

Investment funds costs funded by special purpose — regular resources	60
Other private sector fundraising costs funded by special purpose — regular resources	46
Total private sector fundraising and partnerships costs funded by special purpose — regular resources	**106**
Private sector fundraising and partnerships costs funded by special purpose — other resources	**43**
Total special purpose expenses	**149**

2. *Authorizes* UNICEF

(a) To incur expenses, as summarized in column II of table 2 of document E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.1, and to decrease or increase expenses up to the levels indicated in columns I and III of the same table, should the apparent revenue from fundraising decrease or increase to the levels indicated in columns I and III;

(b) To redeploy resources between the various regular resources budget lines (as detailed in paragraph 1 above), up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 2016 approved workplan.

B. Budgeted revenue for the year 2016

The Executive Board

1. *Notes* that, for the period 1 January to 31 December 2016, Private Fundraising and Partnerships revenue is budgeted at $1.44 billion, as shown in column II of table 2 in document E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.1.

C. Policy issues

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* allocation of investment funds, amounting to $60 million for 2016;

2. *Approves* an interim one-month allocation for January 2017 of $10.6 million (or 10 per cent of the special purpose regular resources allocation), to be absorbed in the annual Private Fundraising and Partnerships budget for 2017;

3. *Stresses* that private fundraising and partnerships for UNICEF shall continue to be conducted in strict compliance with the established guidelines, rules and regulations of UNICEF;

4. *Recalls* that funds from private fundraising and partnerships shall be allocated in accordance with the development priorities of programme countries as

reflected in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 and country programme documents;

5. *Emphasizes* the need for UNICEF to continue to implement in full and on time all recommendations of the Board of Auditors, in particular those relating to the fundraising activities and the management of the National Committees for UNICEF;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to include in the Private Fundraising and Partnerships financial report, which is presented annually at the second regular session, detailed information on its activities relating to its engagement with the business sector and the results achieved in the following three areas: fundraising; child rights and business; and non-financial engagement.

First regular session
3 February 2016

Annual session

2016/4
Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Bangladesh and South Sudan (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.10 and E/ICEF/2016/P/L.9), were made available to Member States for their comments and input from 21 March to 8 April 2016, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1 on modifications to procedures for consideration and approval of country programme documentation;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Bangladesh and South Sudan (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.10 and E/ICEF/2016/P/L.9).

Annual session
15 June 2016

2016/5
Report on the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 and annual report of the Executive Director, 2015: performance and results, including a report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report on the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 and annual report of the Executive Director, 2015: performance and results, including a report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (E/ICEF/2016/6 and Add.1 and 2);

2. *Approves* the revised results framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 (E/ICEF/2016/6/Add.2);

3. *Acknowledges* the significant work and results of UNICEF humanitarian action in 2015 in the context of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, and takes note of the World Humanitarian Summit and the evolving context of humanitarian response;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to continue the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, taking into account lessons learned and the recommendations made in the report on the midterm review in response to the Sustainable Development Goals;

5. *Decides* to transmit the annual report to the Economic and Social Council, along with the summary of the comments and guidance provided by delegations at the present session;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to start early preparations for the next strategic plan, in full consultation with the Executive Board, taking fully into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, other intergovernmentally agreed outcomes, the outcome of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the findings and lessons learned from the midterm review, and further requests UNICEF to present a road map at the 2016 second regular session of the Executive Board for the consultations planned for the preparation of the next strategic plan;

7. *Requests* UNICEF to provide at the next annual session further analysis on the relationship between the planned financial resources, actual expenditures and results achieved.

Annual session
16 June 2016

2016/6
Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the one-year extensions of the country programmes for Cabo Verde, the Central African Republic, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania and Ukraine, which were approved by the Executive Director, as presented in table 1 in document E/ICEF/2016/P/L.11;

2. *Approves* the second one-year extensions of the country programmes for Burkina Faso and Yemen, and the two-year extensions of the country programmes for the Philippines and Senegal, as presented in table 2 in document E/ICEF/2016/P/L.11.

Annual session
16 June 2016

2016/7
Evaluation reports, and management perspective and response

The Executive Board

1. *Takes notes* of the annual report for 2015 on the evaluation function in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2016/11);

2. *Requests* UNICEF to include a geographic and thematic overview of the coverage of evaluations in its next annual report;

3. *Urges* UNICEF to accelerate progress towards achieving the target of allocating a minimum of 1 per cent of its overall programme expenditures to evaluation, in accordance with the Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF (E/ICEF/2013/14), while taking note of the progress made towards the target, and requests UNICEF to present at the 2016 second regular session a plan for reaching this target;

4. *Notes with concern* the lower-than-planned percentage of UNICEF evaluations with a formal management response, urges UNICEF to prioritize the timely delivery of management responses and improve the rate of implementation of agreed evaluation recommendations, and requests UNICEF to report back at the next annual session;

5. *Requests* UNICEF, in collaboration with the other entities of the United Nations development system to support, upon request, the development of national capacities for evaluation, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/237.

Annual session
16 June 2016

2016/8
Internal Audit and Investigations

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2015 annual report to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.3);

2. *Welcomes* the inclusion of a limited audit opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the UNICEF framework of governance, risk management and controls in the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations annual report, and notes with appreciation the general satisfactory ratings with regard to the functioning of governance, risk management and controls;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the increased organizational transparency generated by the disclosure of UNICEF internal audits, in accordance with decision 2012/13 of the Executive Board;

4. *Welcomes* the data provided in the report on disciplinary and/or administrative action taken against perpetrators of misconduct, and encourages management to ensure accountability for any wrongdoing;

5. *Notes* several areas of recurring weakness, including results-based management and reporting, governance and accountability and supply and logistics, appreciates the information provided by management regarding efforts to address these weaknesses and urges management to continue and to intensify efforts to address these issues and provide information in future reports on the impact of measures that they have taken;

6. *Notes with concern* the low levels of defrauded funds reported as recovered and urges management to address this issue as a matter of priority, including identifying obstacles hindering the timely recovery of defrauded funds;

7. *Also notes with concern* that fraud and the misuse of programme funds by third parties remain recurring issues and increased in 2015, and urges UNICEF to address this issue as a matter of priority, including increasing the internal capacity to manage implementing partners.

Annual session
16 June 2016

2016/9
Report on the midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the midterm review of UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017, in response to the request of the Executive Board in its decision 2013/20;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017;

3. *Approves* the revised integrated resource plan as the financial framework for the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 on the basis of projections of resources available, utilization and working capital required for liquidity;

4. *Recognizes* that UNICEF has incorporated the results-based budgeting approach in its integrated budget, and requests UNICEF to improve the analysis of variances between expenditures and planning estimates;

5. *Notes and approves* the proposal made by UNICEF to maintain the following budgets as initially approved in decision 2013/20:

(a) For the Global and Regional Programme, a budget from regular resources of $180 million, subject to the availability of resources, and a ceiling from other resources of $528.4 million, subject to the receipt of contributions to other resources, for the period 2014-2017;

(b) An appropriation for the institutional budget for the period 2014-2017 of $1,978.1 million to cover the costs of development effectiveness, United Nations development coordination, management activities and, within special purpose activities, capital investments, noting the revised projected funding for the appropriation of $1,039.3 million from regular resources and $938.8 million from cost recovery from other resources;

(c) In addition to the appropriation of $1,978.1 million, the projected funding for the institutional budget of $116.4 million from other resources for development effectiveness and United Nations development coordination, subject to the receipt of contributions to other resources;

6. *Notes*, within special purpose activities, the projected utilization of resources for:

(a) The amounts required in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNICEF to defray the costs of UNICEF administration of special accounts on behalf of others, including procurement services and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children;

(b) Private sector fundraising, for which budgets will be submitted annually for consideration and approval by the Executive Board at its first regular session;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to:

(a) Provide actual financial information in the format of the integrated resource plan and to assess performance against the integrated budget in his annual report to the Executive Board;

(b) Submit to the Executive Board for approval annually at its second regular session an updated integrated resource plan, following review of the financial projections on which the plan is based;

(c) Include in its annual reporting to the Executive Board a list of waivers on cost-recovery rates applied to donor contributions;

8. *Acknowledges* the progress made by UNICEF in cost alignment through the implementation of the cost-recovery policy, notes that UNICEF should make further progress and urges UNICEF contributors to adhere to the aspects of the cost-recovery policy approved by the Executive Board in its decision 2013/5;

9. *Recalls* its decision 2013/5 and looks forward to the findings of the external and independent assessment of the consistency and alignment of the cost-recovery methodology with General Assembly resolution 67/226;

10. *Notes* the justification provided for the establishment of an additional 10 director-level positions;

11. *Approves* that authority is given to the Executive Director for a proposed reserve of 10 additional director-level positions to be funded from within the approved institutional budget for 2014-2017 for the period 2016-2017, and requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on the use of this authority and reserve in the context of subsequent integrated budget submissions and reviews;

12. *Encourages* UNICEF to work with other United Nations system entities to ensure an integrated approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;

13. *Requests* UNICEF, in consultation with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, as appropriate, to incorporate relevant lessons learned from the integrated budget, 2014-2017, in preparation for the integrated budget, 2018-2021.

Annual session
16 June 2016

Second regular session

2016/10
Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Albania, Belize, Brazil, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, the Gambia, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Oman, Peru, Thailand, Sao Tome and Principe and Viet Nam and the multi-country programme documents for the Eastern Caribbean (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Turks and Caicos Islands) and Guyana and Suriname (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.12-E/ICEF/2016/P/L.36) were made available to Member States for their comments and input from 21 June to 11 July 2016, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1 on modifications to procedures for consideration and approval of country programme documentation;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Albania, Belize, Brazil, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, the Gambia, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Oman, Peru, Thailand, Sao Tome and Principe and Viet Nam and the multi-country programme documents for the Eastern Caribbean (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Turks and Caicos Islands) and Guyana and Suriname (E/ICEF/2016/P/L.12-E/ICEF/2016/P/L.36).

Second regular session
15 September 2016

2016/11
Review of UNICEF experience in high-income countries and in countries transitioning from upper-middle-income to high-income status

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the review prepared by UNICEF;

2. *Reiterates* the importance of focusing the majority of UNICEF support on least developed countries, wherein least developed countries must receive at least 60 per cent of regular resources and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa at least 50 per cent of regular resources, as described in Executive Board decision 1997/18, and notes that UNICEF programming in low- and middle-income countries should be agreed without requiring fundraising from those countries, although such fundraising should be explored and encouraged;

3. *Welcomes* the important contribution of UNICEF and National Committees for UNICEF to results for disadvantaged children in high-income countries, taking note of the relevance of such work to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals;

4. *Notes* that UNICEF engagement in high-income countries can contribute to increased and diversified funding for the entire organization, and also notes the importance of ensuring financial sustainability, in line with decision 2015/3;

5. *Also notes* the heterogeneity of high-income countries and invites UNICEF to continue to use the most appropriate engagement approach to contribute to results in favour of the most disadvantaged children, depending upon the context in any given high-income country, such as working with other United Nations agencies, working with National Committees, working through UNICEF country offices and programmes, working through multi-country offices and programmes, working through the Global and Regional Programme or, subject to approval by the Executive Board, other approaches as may be developed and tested;

6. *Reiterates* its invitation to UNICEF and countries having transitioned to high-income status to develop country programme documents or multi-country programme documents for consideration and decision by the Executive Board, when a continued country programme presence is jointly identified by the Government and UNICEF as the most appropriate engagement approach, taking into account (a) the importance of responding to the country context; and (b) the importance of ensuring that programme investments in countries having transitioned to high-income status lead to net increases in programme resources available for least developed countries, low-income countries and middle-income countries;

7. *Notes* the existing guidelines for country programme documents, and encourages the exploration of possible scenarios for other appropriate engagement approaches and financial sustainability over time in these documents for countries having transitioned to high-income status;

8. *Encourages* UNICEF to consider multiple dimensions of child well-being as the organization prepares its assessment of the resource allocation system for consideration by the Executive Board in February 2017, taking into account the

Sustainable Development Goal target to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement the gross domestic product, and noting that the current UNICEF policy for the allocation of regular resources for programmes considers the child population, the under-five mortality rate and the gross national income per capita;

9. *Requests* UNICEF to take into consideration and reflect the experiences and lessons learned in high-income countries when developing the new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, in line with the forthcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

10. *Also requests* UNICEF to include in the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 an assessment of its engagement in high-income countries, in consultation with the Executive Board, taking into account lessons learned and including an analysis of financial sustainability;

11. *Further requests* that the issue be reported on in the structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 and requests UNICEF to regularly provide disaggregated data for different country contexts on resources spent and funding received from or generated through activities in these different contexts.

Second regular session
16 September 2016

2016/12
Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the two-month extension of the country programme for Haiti; the first one-year extension of the area programme for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine; and the first one-year extension of the country programme for the Sudan, which were approved by the Executive Director and are presented in table 1 in document E/ICEF/2016/P/L.37;

2. *Approves* the proposed two-month extension of the country programme for Botswana, following a two-year extension; the second consecutive one-year extensions of the country programmes for Malawi and Somalia; the second consecutive two-year extension of the country programme for Burundi; and the third consecutive one-year extension of the country programme for Libya, as presented in table 2 in document E/ICEF/2016/P/L.37.

Second regular session
16 September 2016

2016/13
UNICEF Strategic Plan: updated financial estimates, 2016-2019

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the planned financial estimates for the period 2016-2019 as contained in document E/ICEF/2016/AB/L.6 as a flexible framework for supporting UNICEF programmes;

2. *Notes* the importance of regular resources, which remain the bedrock of UNICEF support to programme countries, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, and to the coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations development system;

3. *Also notes* with serious concern the long-term decline in contributions to regular resources and the increasing imbalance between regular and other resources;

4. *Approves* the integrated resources framework of the planned financial estimates for the period 2016-2019 and approves the preparation of programme expenditure submissions to the Executive Board of up to $1.47 billion from regular resources in 2017, subject to the availability of resources and the continued validity of these planned financial estimates;

5. *Requests* UNICEF to provide annual updates to the Executive Board on the progress of funding its reserves for staff liabilities;

6. *Also requests* UNICEF, in collaboration with other relevant funds and programmes, to present to the Executive Board, in accordance with decision 2013/5, all requested information on cost recovery in time to be included in the consultations on the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 and the Integrated Budget, 2018-2021 at its annual session of 2017;

7. *Reiterates* the need to avoid the use of regular resources to subsidize activities financed by other resources, and reaffirms that the guiding principle governing the financing of all non-programme costs should be based on Executive Board decision 2013/5;

8. *Welcomes* Member States' continued dialogue with UNICEF on funding issues in the structured dialogue on financing, including how to facilitate a shift from highly earmarked resources to regular resources, or less restricted/earmarked resources, and urges Member States to prioritize the provision of regular resources that are flexible, predictable, less earmarked and aligned to the outcomes of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017;

9. *Requests* UNICEF to continue to strengthen the structured dialogue on financing with Member States throughout the year, in accordance with decision 2015/14;

10. *Also requests* UNICEF, in the context of the structured dialogue on financing, to further explore incentives and mechanisms to encourage donor countries and other countries in a position to do so to increase and prioritize regular resources contributions to facilitate a shift to less restricted resources contributions aligned to the Strategic Plan, and to broaden the donor base and attract new sources

of funding, including through new approaches to resource mobilization and new forms of support from diversified sources;

11. *Underscores* the importance of UNICEF engagement in United Nations pooled financing mechanisms in the context of the collaborative implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Second regular session
16 September 2016

2016/14
Proposed programme of work for the Executive Board sessions in 2017

The Executive Board

Adopts the programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2017 as a flexible framework subject to revisions as appropriate in the course of the year.

Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP
(Date to be confirmed)

First regular session *6-10 February 2017*	*Annual session* *13-16 June 2017*	*Second regular session* *12-15 September 2017*
Organizational and procedural matters	**Organizational and procedural matters**	**Organizational and procedural matters**
Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Executive Board *(D)* (January 2017)[1]		Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2018 *(D)*
Programme and policy matters	**Programme and policy matters**	**Programme and policy matters**
Updated road map to and outline of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 *(I)*	Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF *(D)*	UNICEF programme cooperation: Country programme documents *(D)*
Results-based budgeting and assessment of the resource allocation system *(D)*	UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit[2] *(I)*	Extensions of ongoing country programmes *(D)*
UNICEF programme cooperation: Country programme documents *(D)*	UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, draft for review *(I)*	UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 *(D)*
Extensions of ongoing country programmes *(D)*	Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2014-2017 *(I)*	Oral update on UNICEF humanitarian action *(I)*

[1] This date is tentative.
[2] The report is considered under the agenda item "Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF".

First regular session *7-10 February 2017*	*Annual session* *13-16 June 2017*	*Second regular session* *12-15 September 2017*
Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Programme Coordinating Board meetings *(I)* Oral update on UNICEF humanitarian action *(I)*	UNICEF programme cooperation: Country programme documents *(D)* Extensions of ongoing country programmes *(D)*	Gender Action Plan, 2018-2021 *(I)* Structured dialogue on financing results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 *(I)*
Evaluation, audit and oversight matters Evaluation reports and management responses *(I)*	**Evaluation, audit and oversight matters** Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF, and management perspective *(D)* Evaluation reports and management responses *(I)* Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF *(I)* Office of Internal Audit and Investigations annual report to the Executive Board, and management response *(D)* UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee annual report for 2016 *(I)*	**Evaluation, audit and oversight matters** Evaluation reports and management responses *(I)*
Resources, financial and budgetary matters UNICEF annual financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2015 and report of the Board of Auditors *(I)* Private fundraising: 2017 workplan and proposed budget *(D)*	**Resources, financial and budgetary matters**	**Resources, financial and budgetary matters** UNICEF integrated budget, 2018-2021 *(D)* UNICEF integrated budget, 2018-2021: report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[3] Private fundraising and partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2016 *(I)*

[3] The report is considered under the agenda item "UNICEF integrated budget, 2018-2021"

First regular session *7-10 February 2017*	*Annual session* *13-16 June 2017*	*Second regular session* *12-15 September 2017*
Other matters	**Other matters**	**Other matters**
Provisional list of agenda items for the annual session of 2017	Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association Reports of the field visits of the Executive Board *(I)* Provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of 2017	Provisional list of agenda items for the first regular session of 2018

Note:
(D) — *For decision*. The Secretariat prepares documentation on the agenda item. The Executive Board is expected to discuss and adopt a decision under the agenda item.
(I) — *For information*. The secretariat prepares documentation for information. The Executive Board may opt to take a decision under the agenda item.

Second regular session
16 September 2016

Annex II

Executive Board membership: composition for 2016

The composition of the Executive Board for the period 1 January to 31 December 2016 is as follows:

Terms of office expiring on

31 December 2016	31 December 2017	31 December 2018
Andorra	Bangladesh	Australia
Antigua and Barbuda	Belarus	Bosnia and Herzegovina
China	Burkina Faso	Botswana
Estonia	Colombia	Cameroon
Italy	Cuba	Denmark
Netherlands	Eritrea	El Salvador
Panama	Finland	Ethiopia
Papua New Guinea	Japan	India
Russian Federation	Luxembourg	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Republic of Korea	Libya
	United States of America	Nepal
Zambia		Sierra Leone
		Sweden
		Switzerland

Executive Board membership by regional groupings in 2016

Africa (8)	Asia (7)	Eastern Europe (4)
Botswana	Bangladesh	Belarus
Burkina Faso	China	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Cameroon	India	Estonia
Eritrea	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Russian Federation
Ethiopia	Nepal	
Libya	Papua New Guinea	
Sierra Leone	Republic of Korea	
Zambia		

Latin America and the Caribbean (5)

Antigua and Barbuda
Colombia
Cuba
El Salvador
Panama

Western Europe and Others (12)

Andorra
Australia
Denmark
Finland
Italy
Japan
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America

Annex III

Report of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP

1. This annex is a summary of the discussions that took place during the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP), held on 3 June 2016. The text was prepared by the secretariats of the funds and programmes and approved by the Presidents of the four Executive Boards.

A. Working in fragile contexts, inclusive of middle-income countries

2. The President of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS opened the joint meeting by welcoming all participants of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP. He also welcomed the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. In his opening remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General described the setting of joint United Nations engagements against the backdrop of such recent major global agreements as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He highlighted areas in which the United Nations development system needed to collaborate more intensely to construct peaceful societies. Those included: approaching conflict prevention and disaster risk reduction through joint planning and programming, collective leadership and predictable funding; mainstreaming a focus on societies' most vulnerable and marginalized, especially youth, in all programmes; building national statistical systems and scaling up the use of big data; working vertically within Governments and the United Nations system to join forces; expanding the global and regional use of standard operating procedures, such as that for Delivering as one; and reforming the overarching aid architecture.

4. The Administrator, UNDP, and the Executive Director, UNICEF, presented the successes and challenges their organizations faced when working in fragile contexts, including in middle-income countries. The Administrator, UNDP, stressed that conflict and fragility were the main obstacles to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which was why together the United Nations system needed to address root causes and prioritize resilience-building. The United Nations Development Group's (UNDG) mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) approach, she noted, was the right tool to galvanize system-wide efforts. The Executive Director, UNICEF, stressed that, while it was important to focus on fragile States, people had to be at the centre of development and humanitarian work. Better data (disaggregated and innovative), universality (no one left behind) and closer integration of the development-humanitarian nexus (combining poverty, conflict, climate, resource scarcity, etc.) would lead to tangible results on the ground. Those challenges were all inseparable, and so had to be the response.

5. The United Nations Resident Coordinator, Albania, discussed how financing peacebuilding could help to lift least developed countries out of fragility. He drew attention to an emerging consensus on how to tackle crises and build peaceful societies, which included: (a) addressing root causes; (b) practicing conflict prevention in development; (c) driving the principles of sustainable peace throughout the United Nations system; (d) expanding the notion of human rights; (e) bolstering transborder relations; and (f) ensuring predictable funding. In turn, the Subregional Development Coordinator of the Subregional Response Facility for the Syria Crisis discussed the topic of fragility in a protracted crisis context, focused on building resilience in middle-income countries. He highlighted that field evidence demonstrated how shocks could destabilize middle-income countries, setting back hard-won development gains across a region. The inability of current aid architecture to address crises adequately only compounded the situation. The UNDG resilience-based development response, however, combining development and humanitarian in a single platform, was a major advance, in particular for the Syrian Arab Republic crisis. The evidence pointed to the need for: (a) new kinds of crisis response; (b) knowledge and technology; (c) predictable and quality funding; and (d) combining responses on all fronts.

6. The presidents of the four Executive Boards, the heads of the six United Nations organizations and members of the Executive Boards discussed the opportunities and challenges of working in fragile States, inclusive of middle-income countries. Member States were actively engaged throughout the session and provided a number of comments, most notably that:

(a) Fragility in fragile States and in middle-income countries demanded multidimensional, integrated, joint responses, assessments and evaluations to better focus assistance;

(b) Peacebuilding and resilience required the integration of humanitarian and development efforts;

(c) Reforming current aid architecture should be a priority of the United Nations;

(d) "Fragility" as a concept needed a clearer definition to focus on people in every society, including middle-income countries, and not on States;

(e) Financial and institutional strengthening were key to building resilience in fragile contexts; and

(f) Women and girls played a central role in building resilience in fragile contexts.

7. In conclusion, the Executive Director, UNOPS, highlighted that in addressing fragility United Nations assistance had to focus on people, not States, in building resilience before a crisis occurred. Innovative forms of financing were needed along with innovative systems for measuring vulnerability in order to allocate funding and support. In that context, the United Nations had a role to play in attracting private sector investment in fragile high-risk contexts.

8. The President of the Executive Board of UNICEF underlined the importance of United Nations system joint efforts in addressing a broader fragility that affected

all societies, through a people-focused lens, and in halting its spread. In moving from fragility to resilience, the United Nations system needed to prioritize populations at risk, the marginalized and the vulnerable, and tackle root causes by eradicating poverty and reducing disparities and inequalities.

9. In closing, the President of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS thanked delegations and the six United Nations organizations for their participation in the morning segment of the joint meeting.

B Big data and the Sustainable Development Goals

10. The President of the Executive Board of WFP welcomed members of the four Executive Boards, the representatives of the six United Nations organizations and the session's guest speaker to the discussion on big data and the Sustainable Development Goals.

11. In opening remarks, the Executive Director, UNFPA, drew attention to the potential of big data – large data sets that may be analysed to reveal patterns, trends and associations — to provide real-time information, especially during crises. Big data, he noted, also had an impact on people's political and social participation, awareness-raising of key issues, and population mapping, among others. Tapping into the potential of big data, however, required building not only the capacities of national systems and personnel but also those of the United Nations, a move that demanded changing attitudes towards data so that people understood it as evidence.

12. The Executive Director, UN-Women, stressed data's power to provide different social and economic perspectives on issues, in particular with regard to the well-being of women and girls, and to help to inform planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes. Lack of knowledge, she noted, restricted the international community's ability to respond and react to crises. It was therefore necessary to improve national statistical data and to use big data to complement traditional data. Given its potential, knowing how to use and deploy data had to be a paramount objective for Governments and the United Nations. She emphasized, however, that big data did not replace the responsibility to know and act.

13. The Jerry Hultin Global Network Professor at New York University's Tandon School of Engineering and Director of the GovLab, the guest speaker, provided a presentation on how to solve public problems with data. She highlighted that the revolution in current thinking about data entailed a shift in emphasis from Government to transparency of outputs and a policy of open data, which created not only a data economy but also a "data morality". While practitioners had accepted the evidence-based premise, she noted, how to use data to inform policy remained a challenge. But even when that was achieved, conversation, engagement and partnerships needed to revolve around the data-policy nexus. She drew attention to the role "'data collaboratives", such as Twitter or Intel, played in helping to generate new solutions to problems. Phone data, for example, gave a better picture of human movements in Africa than public data, while in New York City phone data was allowing small business owners to pinpoint where to invest. Data alone, however, was not enough; it needed to be cleaned and analysed to be useful. Collaboration and partnerships also helped to ensure untapped talent was being

utilized. Privacy and data access issues, however, meant that it was necessary to build "data responsibility" into aid actions. She highlighted that the United Nations was beginning to explore how best to achieve that through collaboration between the GovLab, the United Nations Global Pulse and various United Nations organizations. In conclusion, she emphasized that the importance of sharing data — not keeping it to oneself — was key to solving development and humanitarian problems.

14. In their response, two Member States intervened and made a number of points, notably that: (a) there was data inequality, wherein some countries and regions had data and the capacity to use it while others did not; (b) cultural attitudes affected data collection and interpretation and could as a result make it unreliable; (c) because the experience of using big data for development and humanitarian activities was still in its early stages, its actual potential remained unclear; (d) ownership and control of databases was problematic, especially when it resided with the private sector, because of its ethical and regulatory implications; (e) people had to be at the centre of big data and be involved in its applications; (f) big data had to serve in building the capacity of national statistical offices to produce data, not overshadow them; and (g) the importance of continuing discussions on big data within the 2030 Agenda.

15. In turn, on the main theme of big data and the Sustainable Development Goals, WFP presented findings from a mobile phone survey that helped to support decision-making at country level, and UNFPA explained how satellite imagery was being used to produce population estimates in Afghanistan. Two Member States highlighted that: while disaggregated data was crucial, many countries lacked the capacity to produce it; and United Nations inter-agency data-sharing was good but too fragmented. They also wished to know the outcome and future of the Chief Executives Board data innovation labs, and if there was an equivalent approach to the data privacy initiative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

16. On the second theme — data collection and methods — UNDP provided a presentation on (a) how new data sources helped to measure changes in poverty in Sudan, using satellite images to determine income levels based on electricity consumption and mobile phone usage; and (b) measuring progress against Goal 16 in Tunisia, using social media data to collect perceptions of corruption. In turn, UNICEF described how it used mobile phones to identify "risk spots" and possible interventions, for example, in response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa. Member States highlighted their national data collection experiences through social media in helping to identify and address issues, and welcomed related efforts by the United Nations. They stressed the importance of building data collection and disaggregation capacity at country level, especially for the least developed countries. They drew attention to the North-South technology gap and stressed the United Nations role in leading efforts to determine how big data could serve all people, while respecting the privacy of individuals. They sought details on when and how the United Nations would invest in building big data capacity or a plan to address it. The Administrator, UNDP, and Chair, UNDG, highlighted the importance of continuous collaboration between United Nations organizations, and pointed to

the catalytic role of the United Nations Global Pulse and its collaboration on most big data initiatives presented by United Nations organizations.

17. In summarizing the discussion, the President of the Executive Board of WFP noted the timeliness of the discussion, given the data revolution and the 2030 Agenda, and the growing importance of evidence-based programming and monitoring and evaluation for results. He stressed, however, the challenges of building capacity for big data, which many countries still lacked. The potential of the rapidly expanding and diversification of communications technology was huge and the United Nations had to harness that power. It was therefore necessary to strengthen national capacity for big data while at the same time establishing a regulatory framework to protect privacy. The United Nations, he suggested, could also serve as a convenor for data collaboratives in the future.

18. In closing remarks, the President of the Executive Board of UN-Women and Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations highlighted the need to: apply a gender lens throughout United Nations work on big data; close the digital gender gap; and protect privacy. His Excellency also stressed that while big data did not replace government work to collect data it could complement it.

19. The President of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS closed the meeting by thanking delegations and the six United Nations organizations for their active participation and fruitful discussion.

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